

Snapshots
on
Life's Highway

Maude Speed



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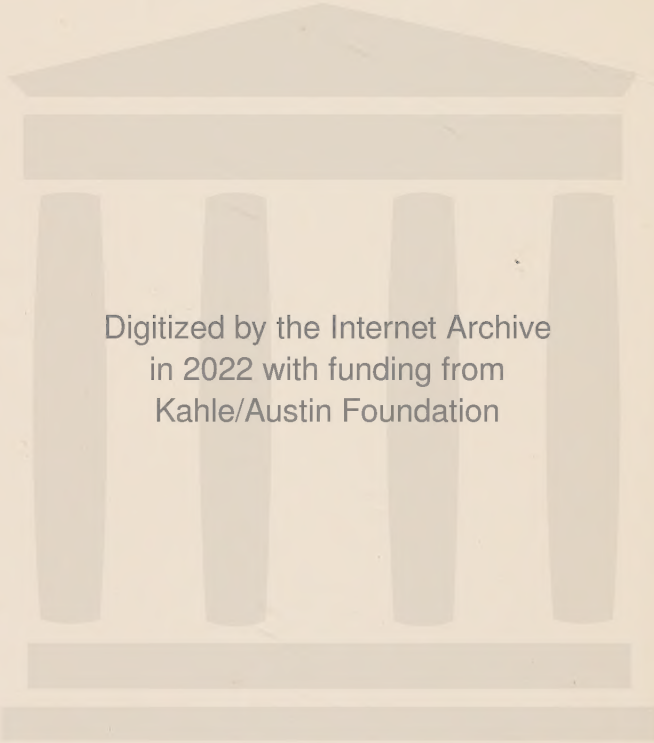


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SNAPSHOTS ON
LIFE'S HIGHWAY







ARCHED AND STAG ROCKS, FRESHWATER BAY, I.W.

By MAUDE SPEED

SNAPSHOTS ON LIFE'S HIGHWAY

BY

MAUDE SPEED

AUTHOR OF "A YACHTSWOMAN'S CRUISES,"
"THROUGH CENTRAL FRANCE TO THE PYRENEES,"
"MORE CRUISES," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH SKETCHES BY
LANCELOT SPEED, AND
THE AUTHOR

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PREFACE

WHAT is the motive power that makes an obscure individual like myself feel impelled to put on record the incidents and recollections of a very ordinary life? Is it merely vanity and garrulity? Or is it the natural craving to leave behind us *something*, however small, that will not be entirely wiped away when we pass into oblivion, even as a pebble does when thrown into a pond—just a few sad ripples over the spot where it sinks and it is gone and forgotten? No, I think there is a more solid reason for the many memoirs appearing nowadays. We live in most remarkable times. We have seen changes and revolutions in the order of things, which have altered the aspect of life far more in half (or even a quarter) of a century than did the passage of three hundred years backwards from mid-Victorian days. A person in the fifties, could he have been whisked backwards into Elizabethan times, would have felt less strange and surprised than he would if he had found himself suddenly living in the present reign. We feel, therefore, we have something to write about if only we could do justice

to the subject. The new order has come to stay, but we of the older generation cannot help feeling rather like fish out of water. We look back regretfully into the quieter and more peaceful days of past years, when things walked at a less rapid pace, and there was more leisure for thought, and more peace of mind, and we long to hand down to posterity a little realisation of that different atmosphere ere it vanishes before the blasts of the howling breezes and storms of to-day.

I think there are many who may like to look back with me, and compare the days that were with those that are, and I can at least assure them that, however trivial the events recorded may be, they are true, unexaggerated, and devoid of slander on those who have passed on—a rule too often ignored by more competent writers than myself. The shortcomings of the letterpress will, I hope, be atoned for in your opinions by the excellent sketches of my brother-in-law, Lancelot Speed, whose spirited work is well known to readers of *Punch*.

MAUDE SPEED.

SEDGE END,
KEYHAVEN,
MILFORD-ON-SEA.

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SNAPSHOTS ON LIFE'S HIGHWAY

CHAPTER I

THE LONG TRAMP BEGINS

“ The bairn that’s born on the Sabbath Day
Is happy and lucky and wise and gay.”

AND wishing to be all those good things in large measure I selected an Easter Sunday (the very Queen of all the Sabbaths) on which to start my journey on Life’s Highway!

And has the old saying played me false? Well, I think not, though if luck means riches and luxurious living, and sitting in the seats of the mighty it has, for nothing of that sort has come my way. Neither has wisdom been given me, I fear, in as full a measure as the Easter Sabbath birth should lead one to expect, and if I had had my proper measure possibly my pen would be in the inkstand at this moment and not in my hand! But I have been dowered

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with what I think are the two best gifts the Fates can offer, without which riches are as Dead Sea fruit in the mouth—phenomenal good health (I tap wood as I write it), and for my life's partner the sunniest-tempered and most delightful companion that was ever given to woman. With those two things all right, none could be otherwise than "happy and gay" even if not endowed with the natural *joie de vivre* that comes with high spirits and sound health.

And indeed one *wants* to start life either with a phlegmatic disposition that takes everything calmly, just as it comes, or with a great reserve of buoyancy and lightness of mind, for sorrows and tragedies come into the lives of most of us poor pilgrims on our long march. Indeed there are some griefs from which there is no real recovery any more than there is for a fallen tree that may still have a bit of its root in the earth, and may still put forth some green leaves, but will never hold its head to heaven in the glorious sunlight, as it once did. However, I do not propose to inflict any dark chapters of life on my readers: these pages shall be like a sundial which records only bright hours.

Amongst the blessings that have come my way must also be named the priceless one of

the happiest of childhood's homes, over which was diffused an atmosphere of that real parental love which never loses sight of the fact that children are not to be treated as merely amusing toys, but men and women in the making. And the old home kept its place as the centre of the earth for us all long after we grew up and scattered, for my parents celebrated their golden wedding a few months before my father died. Perhaps in speaking of my beloved old home I may be allowed to quote a tribute to it that appeared in a newspaper after my mother's death in 1922 : " People of all classes and ranks loved Canon and Mrs. Maturin, and the Vicarage at Lymington was the centre of social life and hospitality, for they were never so happy as when entertaining their friends. Their house was a typical old English happy home. People now grey-haired look back through the mists of years to the merry parties and pleasant gatherings under that roof and the genial welcome always awaiting them there from their host and hostess. Present-day conditions, with the shortage of servants, the cost of provisions, and the general unrest, have made such a hospitable house as theirs almost a thing of the past."

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There is no over-estimating the possession in one's memory of a happy early home. It is an anchor that holds all through life. It is a sacred ikon that nothing can destroy. It brings wandering sheep, who have strayed far from it and lost their way in the slippery places of the earth, back eventually into safety—not probably into the old fold, for that may have passed away by then, but into another of perhaps their own making, built on the lines of the old one, and with its influence working secretly all the time, though oceans may roll between, and those who made the early home what it was may be long laid under the sod.

CHAPTER II

IN THE HOME—THEN AND NOW

THERE are unimportant, trivial incidents of everyday life that somehow get photographed as it were into one's memory and remain always there as clear as a picture. One such little snapshot amongst many of the old home has never faded from my mind. On Sundays, instead of the usual afternoon tea, we used to have a jolly 5 o'clock sit-down meal round the dining-room table, with coffee instead of tea (I can smell the fragrance of it now!) to make a change. I had been out once and came in rather late to it, and the others had begun. As I appeared at the door everyone with a "Here she is!" turned to look at me with bright welcoming faces—father, mother, two brothers and two sisters—all the smiling eyes converging on me. I stood a few seconds looking at them and they at me, and I thought how lucky I was to have such a home. It

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was mid-winter, the cosy red curtains were drawn, the fire crackled and blazed, we were relieved from the presence of my sister's governess (I had just left school), and my brothers were at home for their holidays. I cannot say why that complete little scene has remained indelibly impressed on my mind when so many similar ones have faded, but there it is—I can even see the dog looking up at me too, and the cat on the hearth!

One does not come across many of those merry family parties in English houses now. The general spirit of unrest causing frequent moves from one house and place to another, the lamentable prevalence of the solitary "only child" in the nursery, and the habit of running off in the car for the week-end account for this partly, but the difficulty of getting and keeping a good staff of servants, and the complete disappearance of the faithful, contented, *competent* family retainer of the past, is the chief reason for the absence of that safe, settled feeling we had in the dwellings of long ago. This, in fact, is an axe that has been laid to the very root of our foundations; it spoils the pleasure of all our homes, and makes even those whose nesting instincts are strongest feel inclined at times to

burn all household gods, pack other belongings into a few trunks, and live a nomad's life in hotels or other refuges of the homeless. To recall the records of service in the days that were, must sound like a fairy-tale to the housekeepers of this age. I will give a few instances of those in my own family, with apologies for making you all green with envy!

The nurse who took charge of me when I was a month old nursed all my brothers and sisters also (with a nursery-maid under her), and never left us for more than a few days' holiday sometimes, till I was eighteen, and my youngest brother—now Vicar of Colbury—had gone away to school; then she became the second wife of the church clerk, and continued to take a quite maternal interest in all our doings for the remainder of her life. At the time of my marriage (in 1883) the parlour-maid had been fourteen years with us, and both the cook and housemaid many years, and when my father died and the home was broken up (in 1905) his old groom (George Henning) had spent forty-five years in his service, while our gardener (William Ploughman) had recently passed away after tending the roses and verbenas in that lovely old-world garden for thirty-three years! Such people become *valued*

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friends, one cannot remember the time without them, and they have woven their work into a part of one's very life.

But there was another faithful Abigail in my father's family whose length of service breaks all records I have ever heard of, for she served three generations of Maturins for eighty-three years without a break !

You are incredulous, but it is a fact. She came into my grandfather's house early in the last century (about 1820) as a little kitchen-maid at the age of twelve. When he died many years later she went with my eldest uncle to his home—Gartan Rectory, Donegal—nursed all his children till they outgrew her, and then returned to her original sphere in the kitchen. On the death of my uncle, " Hannah " moved to a new home with my two eldest cousins, and there she remained, doing light jobs when too old for cooking, petted and cared for as an honoured friend till she died at the age of ninety-five.

And how much happier and more contented they seemed in the kitchen under the old regime ! The usual dinner-hour when I was a child was 6.30 or 7 at latest, and by the time I had left the schoolroom and the high-tea

there to join my parents at the late dinner the hour was 7.30. Before the later hours came in, tea was served after dinner instead of in the afternoon (for guest-nights coffee immediately after dinner and tea at 9 was the rule). So that gave the staff longer evenings to themselves than when the later hours came in, and after their supper they would play games, sing, and do needlework very happily. Their wages were half, or a third, of what they are asking nowadays, but in spite of that there was far more saving, and buying of household linen and other goods for the bottom drawer than there is now ; but then they didn't think it necessary to wear light-coloured silk stockings, 5s. gloves, and constant new fur-trimmed coats, and costumes, and hats, for out of doors, nor to spend £12 on hotels when on holiday (I know one who spent that last summer !). It is an age in which there is no thrift or saving, and they follow suit. The scarcity of workers in that class is no doubt partly caused by the dole (that curse of our land) and the unemployment allowance. As long as other people's money can be had for doing nothing there will be no real desire for work—it takes the zest and spirit out of it. It is the most mischievous and

terrible aftermath that the War has left us to grapple with, and is at the bottom of most of the restlessness, slackness, and discontent of these times. "If any man work not, neither shall he eat" has lost its threat now!

The rising upper-class generation having come too late to remember the joys of a well-served home, will doubtless be more able to stand up to the difficulties that have become the rule than we are. Never having known better conditions, they will take the present ones for granted, and things are adjusting themselves more and more every year. We have all learnt to be more practical, and we don't care who catches us doing useful things now. Men and women clean their own cars, cut their own lawns, trim hedges, and do all sorts of things they never dreamt of doing once for fear of losing caste. No one troubles about that now—we have thrown the vices of snobbishness and pretence to the winds. We are no longer like the lady fallen into poverty from better days in one of Mr. Arnold Bennett's novels, who kept herself hidden behind the hall door while a furtive hand and arm endeavoured to polish the door-handle. Now if the door-handle wants polishing and we are servantless, we polish

it shamelessly and hang the onlookers! We recall Dr. Johnson's curt retort to a woman who simpered to him, "What can look worse than a mended glove?" "Madam, a glove that wants mending," he snapped out. Work and usefulness were once thought "beneath the dignity of a lady"—just as the Chinese think now, and grow their nails longer than Nebuchadnezzar's to show that they do no manual work. Woe to any woman who thinks that now and acts upon it, for sooner or later she will find herself in a tight corner. Servants have a way of suddenly vanishing, singly or *en bloc*, and everyone ought to be prepared for that possibility. Wise girls go through a course of instruction in domestic arts (surely cooking should take first rank amongst the arts, for our health, and therefore life, depends on it) and study domestic work in a manner that was never dreamt of when servants were as plentiful as blackberries upon the hedges, and almost as cheap! My mother having come from a luxurious home with twelve servants in the kitchen had never learnt anything at all about cooking (it is impossible to do so in a large establishment with both men and women servants), but she had the common sense to

insist on her daughters learning something about it, and when I left school our cook gave me lessons in cake-making, etc., and I was thought quite good at it, and even took a prize for a sponge cake at a "cooking bee"! But, alas! when I married and set up house with one little maid, I learnt that the cook had done all the most difficult part of the performance, namely, the baking. My first cake was burnt outside. "A little over-done," I said; but when we cut it there was a decided bone in the middle. My husband had done a lot of cooking while cruising alone in various small yachts, so he cut the "bone" up and fried it in slices, which made the best of a bad job. Then I felt I could make pancakes with anyone—but they came out as heavy as lead, not like any pancake that was ever tossed, though the dear man with a brave face ate them up and said they were excellent! Now the young wife of to-morrow, when the cook goes off in a huff, instead of feeling completely stranded will snap her fingers at the banged back door, and feel quite at home with the pots and pans and the stoves, whether coal, gas, or oil (or perhaps she will evade domestic problems altogether, go off to a restaurant, dine there and dance between

the courses—if her pocket permits of that escape from the difficulty!). Practical experience is the only thing required really to make a cook, *and care*—the light touch soon comes with practice, though lessons and study give the beginner a good start.

But although girls certainly devote more attention to practical work now, it seems to me that not nearly so much time and attention are paid to book-learning and general knowledge and the study of the arts as formerly, and I note this with concern, for when youth departs and the grey years come, what is there to fall back upon if the mind be uncultured? Any art is a despotic mistress, requiring constant and unremitting study and attention, and whole-hearted determination to excel, if you are going to be any good at it—otherwise you are simply wasting time in taking it up. I see many girls who have shown great promise in a certain art throwing that completely to the winds directly they leave school and filling their days from morning to night with games—healthy and excellent in moderation, but I think put too much in the fore-front of life now: they should be a recreation, not a serious pursuit. Painting and music, for instance, cannot thrive on

starvation diet—an odd half-hour spared to them on a wet day perhaps, or when there is nothing else to do, just as if they were a new crotchet stitch or a crossword puzzle! Moreover, the mind cannot develop and improve without reading solid works daily, and books should be read in all languages that have been learnt at school. Also during the holidays it surprises me to see children allowed complete idleness—their minds become quite demoralised with ceaseless play. It is like feeding the body on a diet of macaroons and chocolates! Holiday tasks were the rule in my home, and they gave an added zest to our amusements. They were no trifling tasks either! I remember one summer, in the intervals of bathing and boating and scrambling over rocks and downs at the seaside, that I had to learn by heart the chief part of Pope's "Essay on Man" and the first canto of "The Lady of the Lake," to read history with my father and Shakespeare with my mother for an hour daily, and to acquire such minor arts as the netting of silk purses (like Becky Sharp in "Vanity Fair"), knitting, and embroidery! This is an age of frivolity, and I fear a great number of the young mothers do not now instil into children's minds a love



A MODERN MOTHER

of anything more solid than games and tearing about the country in cars, seeing and noticing nothing as they rush along.

I was watching last summer an Eton-cropped, short-frocked mother with a cigarette in her mouth and two small boys clinging to her skirts (or the little there was to get hold of in them), as they came down to a seashore in the Isle of Wight. Having arrived there, she stretched herself at full length on the shingle in the refined attitude adopted to-day, and continued to smoke in idleness, while her poor children, receiving no attention, were allowed to amuse themselves as best they could by throwing stones and yelling to the discomfort of other people. My mind went back to another mother on that same beach with her children more than half a century ago, who entered into their interests, called their attention to the distant ships on the horizon line, told of the countries they were going to and the strange sights their sailors would see, spoke of the various sea-birds and their habits, bought their different eggs in a little shop where they were sold, and in fact did all in her power to encourage the seeing eye, the quick powers of observation, and that general interest in things which is such a great

dower to go through life with, and the only thing that makes foreign or home travel otherwise than a waste of time and money.

“ But weren't the old days very dull without cars to drive in, and no wireless, and no golf, and not even bicycles? What did you do to amuse yourselves? ” I hear you young folk say. We did very well, thank you! Tennis arrived in the 'seventies; before that we played croquet and cricket (no one ever heard of football, and we associated golf with Scotland only), and as we grew older, archery, that splendid old-world sport, delighted us, and we rode a great deal on horseback. There we had the pull over you entirely, for nothing touches that for healthy exercise and a vent for high spirits. Life has no more satisfying pleasure to offer than a good gallop over grass on a perfect thoroughbred, and the world never seems quite so sunny and all right as when looked at over the tips of those beautiful and expressive things—a horse's ears. As soon as I could sit on anything larger than a donkey a New Forest pony was bought for us, other excellent ponies were to be hired in the place, and my father rode with us on his white horse. For a great treat he used to take me to a meet of the New

Forest hounds, with strict injunctions that we were to return when they found, but the same thing always happened—at the first Tally-ho! and sound of the horn off I bolted with the rest of the hunt, deaf to his calls to return, and hours afterwards I would follow him home to get a good scolding, with a twinkle in his blue eyes all the time! Then everybody had carriages—good, bad, or indifferent—and we went off on half-holidays for picnics to the sea-shore at Milford or into the Forest, where we collected sticks and lit a gipsy fire for tea (thermos flasks being unknown). And we took long walks in woods and through lovely fields, and country then *was* country—not all stuck over with new bungalows and tin-roofed cottages, and the trees were allowed to remain along the high roads and hedges, not felled wherever there is anything for an axe to get at, as is the lamentable case to-day when our once-beautiful land is getting as bare and ugly as a market garden.

Children's parties in the old days were certainly much simpler affairs than now. Small people were not so blasé then and more easily pleased. A magic-lantern show excited us to trembling pitch, games and charades delighted

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us, dances were a rare event, chiefly of the fancy-dress species, and Christmas trees were a never-failing joy. Now with children constantly taken to the cinemas a magic-lantern would be disdained, and I am told the music and refreshments (often with champagne) at children's dances are on a most elaborate scale, and they turn up their noses at a game party. In fact, they are rather sorry for themselves if in England at all for the Christmas holidays, as so many are taken to Switzerland for the sports (regardless of the expense entailed by the long journey and the hotel prices at that season) that the left-behind ones feel rather envious. A visit to London to see a pantomime *used* to be the highest pitch of wild dissipation a child could possibly attain to! And their toys now are so needlessly expensive and complicated. The simple dolls and little carts drawn on wheels by ourselves are now replaced by large dolls dressed in the latest fashion or by hideous unlovable things that a child cannot surely want to hug to its heart in bed, and nothing short of a clockwork or motor-driven car or toy boat would be tolerated by Master 1929! But I don't think they are any happier for their costly playthings than we

were with ours long ago—I know the “rag dolls” our mother made, with faces painted by herself, were our favourites! The toys of to-day are often so complicated that Daddy plays with them while the lawful owner looks on disappointed and bored to tears.

Two little events happened “when we were very young” which I should like to mention, as they made an impression on me which the passage of years has not obliterated. The first of these took place in Lymington Church when I was about eight. My father had just published the banns of marriage when a shrill voice rang out, “Stop, stop, stop! I forbid those banns of marriage to be published in this or in any other church.” The sensation was electric. People in the gallery all sprang to their feet in their endeavour to see the objector, and most of the other members of the congregation stood up too. The Vicar, who always intuitively did the right thing in an emergency, said to the woman, “Come into the vestry when the service is over and I will hear what you have to say.” She did so, and he gave her his sympathetic help as far as he could, and interviewed the faithless swain, who said he was tired of her and had transferred his affections

to another woman, so she was finally persuaded into thinking she was well rid of him, and to "grin and bear it," which is the only thing to do under such circumstances—unless they justify a breach of promise action.

The other event was highly dramatic and thrilling. I was awakened in the night by a great deal of talking and bustle and the lights burning, so I crept out of bed, ran on to the landing, and peered over the banisters into the hall, where, to my astonishment, I saw three burly policemen all talking together in great excitement, and no wonder, for our house had been broken into by real professional burglars ! My father was awakened by a mysterious noise. The clock said 2 A.M. He quietly arose, loaded his revolver, and was half-way down the stairs when he saw a light in the drawing-room. Yelling out "Who's there ?" he made a dash for the door, but the intruders were too quick for him, there was a wild scuffle of feet and they leapt into the dark garden, where he followed them, only to tumble into a rose-bed and scratch his face. He then hastily dressed (for he was in scant attire) and rushed off to the police-station, nearly a mile away, to see if they could be overtaken. Two men were eventually

arrested in Bristol and tried at the Winchester Assizes, but there was not sufficient evidence to convict them, though they had been seen close to the house an hour before the robbery was committed, and a golosh dropped by one of them in his flight had been sold to him by a tradesman on the previous day. They were well known to the police and had served at least one sentence for house-breaking. The barrister defending the prisoners said to my father afterwards, "Well, Mr. Maturin, those were your men right enough, though they just got off by the skin of their teeth, through the evidence being only circumstantial." They carried off from my home a handsome silver inkstand that had been presented to my father by the inhabitants of Ringwood, and a few more small articles before their operations were interrupted. The house had been entered through the coal-cellar, and of course after this affair all the doors and shutters were fitted with burglar alarms, and my brothers used to say you didn't dare move out of your bedroom in the night for fear of getting a bullet through your brain! This affair was a nine days' wonder. Nothing else was talked of, and as my father never lost an opportunity when

preaching of seizing people's attention so that he might rub in a good lesson, he chose for his text on the following Sunday morning—Matt. xxiv. 43: "But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." You can imagine how the congregation sat up and pricked their ears, thinking they were going to hear all about it—but he never mentioned the burglary at all! Derrick was the name of one of the men arrested, and Nemesis was at his heels even then, for shortly after this narrow escape from jail he fell dead in the act of robbing a house. The owner heard a thud, and going to the room from which the noise came, Derrick was found on the floor with his pockets full of the goods he was in the act of annexing!

CHAPTER III

SCHOOLS OF THE PAST—AND WOMEN OF TO-DAY

GIRLS in the educational stage to-day do not know how lucky they are, with their gymnasiums and hockey and tennis matches, etc., for school life has undergone a great change during the last twenty years. Games have become a feature, and are, to my old-fashioned mind, perhaps made *rather* too much of nowadays—for all the ambitions and interests of both boys and girls are centred on them instead of on their studies; but when it was decreed that I should put in a year and a half at a London finishing school (away back in the 'seventies) games were never dreamt of, and little outdoor exercise allowed, which was going very much to the other extreme. And, indeed, a school like the one I went to in Westbourne Terrace, W., run on lines that even then were behind the times, was a terrible place for a poor little country girl to

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enter who had been accustomed to much freedom and life in the open air.

When my father took me up to London and left me in the care of the two terribly formidable old maids who had been trained under their aunt, Miss Magary (the dragon of a previous generation), and the door closed on him, my heart sank within me ! A missionary to Greenland described to me once his feelings of despondency when the ship that brought him to that bleak land of ice and snow slowly disappeared below the horizon line, and he knew there would be no possibility of news even, from the world of civilization, for months. Well, I felt like that man. The life there was an imprisonment—and in a straight jacket too, for their one idea of refinement was to repress all high spirits, all natural and unpremeditated speech, and to make their charges, in fact, into affected and priggish little snobs ! The only exercise we took in the day was a walk in Hyde Park or Kensington Gardens from 9 till 10, then no more sunshine or fresh air for that day, but hard study and masters succeeding one another till bedtime. I was fearfully homesick. I wanted my games in the garden, and my rides in the Forest, and I longed for a sight of the

Needles standing out in the blue sea, and the cheering company round the home fire. Sometimes we were taken for a drive in a hired carriage to teach us how young ladies should behave on such occasions, and of course I hailed the opportunity of looking at everything going on in the gay world; but I was soon told "Miss Maturin must not look out of the window— young ladies sit back in a carriage, out of sight"!

Of course I was always in hot water. Perhaps the greatest shock I gave my mistress was during a Confirmation class, when the clergyman taking it (one of the extinct Puritan sort) told us that renouncing "the world, the flesh, and the devil" meant no balls and no theatres, and he asked us one after the other if we intended to renounce these. Each girl lisped a timid "yes" till my turn came, and then I said, "Oh dear no, sir! I am up here to fit myself for entering society. I am learning dancing of Madame Michou in preparation for going to balls, and I am longing to go to theatres." It was like a bombshell thrown into the room! The clergyman (so unlike my broad-minded father) was quite flabbergasted, and did not know what to say to this sinner in their midst; and the head mistress was deeply shocked, and said afterwards that "Miss Maturin ought

to be ashamed of herself for presuming to argue with a clergyman." I said I should be more ashamed of myself if I had told lies, and she left it at that.

In the second term a most blessed event occurred. One of the girls was stricken with scarlet fever, and all the others were sent away at once for fear of infection. My parents quarantined me at Winchester for a fortnight, and then I begged them to let me go for a time to a school kept by these old dragons' nieces at Clifton. There was a totally different atmosphere in that house. The girls were pleasant and natural, the two mistresses kind and human and comparatively young. I was allowed to ride twice a week with a master and two other girls, and the gallops on the downs kept me happy. We made excursions, too, for sketching, and were taken to concerts and taught intelligently instead of being so crammed and hustled that we had time to digest nothing properly. I stayed there till the final term of my education, and that my parents felt I must spend at the Westbourne Terrace house of gloom ; but as I saw daylight then I endured it better, and my mother got leave for me to spend every Saturday afternoon with a kind great-aunt (Mrs. Stewart),

and to go with her sometimes to concerts and oratorios—but oh ! the joy of a final escape from that cage and its fetters, though I took the greatest interest in the studies, especially those



“MISS MATURIN OUGHT TO BE ASHAMED OF HERSELF”

connected with the high arts, and felt fully alive to the advantages of learning them from those first-rate masters.

Such school-mistresses as I have described

do not exist to-day. They belong, indeed, to a type that has disappeared, I am glad to say, both in the schools and elsewhere. Where have the people gone to now (if they are not in another world!) whom my brothers used to call "old geyzers"? A country town more than a generation ago was simply swarming with unwanted women!—elderly spinsters and widows with independent incomes, who, having nothing to do in life, degenerated too frequently into mischievous busybodies of the cat tribe. A few took pupils or taught in schools, but the majority lived in nice houses and kept servants, so never put their hands to any useful work, being too elegant (or lazy) even to dust their drawing-room ornaments, or help in cultivating the flowers in their gardens. Let me hasten to add that they were not all run in this mould. There were many excellent and invaluable women "of whom the world was not worthy," generous and unselfish, devoted to good works in the parish, and in fact ever ready to extend a helping hand where it was wanted. My mother never encouraged gossip, or allowed scandal to be talked in her house, so we kept clear of the former class, and left them to themselves. Spinsters of this kind have become since the Great War as extinct as the

dodo. The scarcity of servants would have driven them out of large houses, and would have forced them to do their own work to a great extent, and probably they were urged into some kind of useful post in the War, and found it distasteful after that to return to the drone existence. At any rate the idle, useless "old maid" of former years is rarely seen, but one meets far more intelligent, bright women travelling on the Continent (a thing never dreamt of in old days), and there are all kinds of organisations run by active elderly women, and they play golf and bridge, and keep going in every way. So I suppose these are the reincarnations of our old friends who spent all their afternoons paying calls, or sitting up in caps and mittens dressed for visitors—dressed, mark you, in a style that made them look centenarians, when perhaps they were only the same age as their active representatives of to-day, who have learnt that the world has simply no use for incompetent people now; and I think we must put down on the asset side of these much-abused post-war days that this dodo (or dodoess?) is extinct, for we can do very well without her. The woman who fifty years ago took a short stroll or a bath-chair ride in the afternoons is replaced by one driving her

own car in this third decade of the twentieth century !

No one had any idea, till the exigencies of the Great War developed them, of the wonderful capabilities for business and for filling positions of trust and importance that lay latent in women and girls. Years ago it would have been thought that they had neither the strength of mind or body to occupy with efficiency the posts of tram conductors, of motor ambulance drivers, and of a hundred difficult and trying jobs in which they played a splendid part in our hour of need. Now girls of all ranks are crowding into business. They are to be found as typists and clerks and telephonists in all the offices of great shipping companies and houses of public and private enterprise, they are behind the counters as well as in the offices and desks of shops (even chemists and large grocery stores), and although they are *excellent* in every way, and I admire them much, I am rather sorry to see so many of them there, because every post that they occupy means one less for the men and swells the ranks of unemployed chemists, shopmen, clerks, etc. If these could retaliate, and fill some of the thousands of empty places in domestic service, all would be well, but they

cannot, for a man could not become a child's nurse, a lady's maid, or a housemaid (though I wonder more do not take up cooking, as they do in France!). Yet I suppose that the mothers of quite two-thirds of our new business girls followed these honourable and most useful careers, and incidentally qualified themselves to be good wives and housekeepers in their future homes. I fear the world is not such a happy place for men to live in now as it was in the days that are gone! Not the War, but the higher education given in the Board and other schools, started this state of affairs, which began long ago—practically, I believe, when girls ceased leaving school at twelve.

CHAPTER IV

A VISIT TO IRELAND

It was about two years before I went away to school that I had my first real tour. To our immense delight my parents took the elder of my two sisters and me to visit relatives in Ireland and to see the scenes in the north of Donegal of my father's boyhood around Fannet Rectory, in that beautiful promontory that lies between Lough Swilly and Mulroy, with the blue Knockalla mountains to the south and the open Atlantic rolling in its great billows on the shore to the north. The hospitality in Ireland has always been proverbial, and we were deluged with invitations ; no one seemed to think twice about receiving four guests into their houses at short notice, but then servants were plentiful and hard-working, and that made entertaining a pleasure, instead of a consideration to be reckoned with as it is to-day !

The journey to Holyhead and voyage across the Irish Sea were full of absorbing interest to us, and after a halt in Dublin we visited my father's cousins, Sir John and Lady Ripton, at their lovely place "Woodbrook," in the County Wicklow, near the far-famed Dargle Glen. Their beautiful only daughter had flown from the nest by then, for she had during her first season married Sir Frederick Hervey-Bathurst, and gone away to live in England. Those Wicklow mountains, with their soft lights and shades (a distinctive feature of Irish scenery), seen from "Woodbrook" delighted me, and are a vision which will never be forgotten. Then we journeyed north, taking from Carrickfergus a sixty-mile drive by mail-coach and jaunting-car (that horribly uncomfortable Irish vehicle) round the coast of Antrim to the Giant's Causeway, on to Londonderry, and from thence into the heart of Donegal to my uncle's Rectory at Gartan. This peaceful spot, far from any railway, was really the back of beyond, and why a clever, intellectual man buried himself for the best part of a lifetime in such a remote corner can only be accounted for by the fact that he was obsessed by an all-absorbing hobby—fishing, and *that* he had in perfection

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and in every form. There was fishing on the lake to which his grounds ran down, trout fishing on various streams, salmon were plentiful in a fine river near, and fine fish of various kinds were to be taken on Lough Veagh, 14 miles off. And when he wanted a change he went to stay with friends on the coast, or on Mulroy, and got *sea*-fishing! My father loved the sport too; my sister didn't take to it at all, but I entered into it with zest, and caught five large salmon peel from a boat on Lough Veagh in one afternoon. We rode over the wild hills to that lovely spot on horses, and lunched with the Adairs, who owned a big house and a vast tract of country there.

The services in Gartan's little church were well attended by people who came from great distances to this their one event of the week, and the only occasion on which they met their fellow creatures. We saw a family of seven who had come from a mountain farm eleven miles away with one horse between them, on which they took turns to ride! The congregation picketed their horses near the church, ate their alfresco lunch near them, and returned to the 3 o'clock service before leaving. Though many of the country people there could not read or



WE ROW OFF TO FISH THE LOUGH

write, they nearly all spoke and understood two languages—English and Gaelic.

In my father's boyhood the sermons were never less than an hour, often double that time. They were regulated by an hour-glass, and a parson with his full share of an unstinted flow of words would frequently say, "Well, I'll give you another glass," turn it round and go on like a running river. To give short measure was quite a grievance, and would give rise to the remark, "Ah, it wasna' a fu' glass ye gave us last Sabbath morn."

In my uncle's church there were hymn-books, but no singing (I believe they read the hymns!) as there was no instrument, and no one who could play it if there had been. We therefore had rather a startler in the middle of the service by my uncle (who acted on a sudden idea) saying to my mother, "Adelaide, could you raise a hymn?" She assented, and he gave one out, so there was nothing for it but to stand up and plunge boldly into our work. The congregation listened open-mouthed, and one was heard to say afterwards, "Sure, to hear they ladies sing was like listening to the angels in heaven, singing to their golden harps." Poor things, how easily they were pleased! A

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service without singing is indeed dull, as the young soldier would think who said he didn't hold with religion, but he did like singing hymns !

It is going back beyond our own times, but as I have brought you with me to visit some spots where my father's family have lived in this fair land of their adoption, I should like to recount the extraordinary events which led them to settle there, as they are more strange than fiction. Three hundred years ago the Du Maturins were "an ancient and noble family of France," owning fine estates and much wealth at Mont Auriol in Guienne, and it does not appear that they adopted the Reformed religion till a century or so after the terrible persecutions of the Huguenots under the influence of Catherine de Medicis, backed up by the Pope and Philip of Spain. They therefore escaped the universal slaughter in the troublous times of the latter half of the sixteenth century. Then came a time of peace and respite for them when the Edict of Nantes was proclaimed. But in 1685 this Edict was revoked, and the partisans of the Reformed religion fell a prey to the same fury that had decimated the fore-runners of their Faith. As members of that

Faith the Du Maturins were attacked, their estates and all worldly goods were seized and confiscated, Gabriel, the head of the family, was torn from his wife and two young sons, and thrown into the Bastille. How he escaped death is not known, probably the influence of some faithful friend saved him, but in that terrible prison he was kept for *twenty-five years*, and then, when quieter and more tolerant times had set in, he was liberated, and friends of the cause sent him penniless and broken to Holland. There he heard that a lady of his own name with two sons had arrived in that land as refugees years before, and had gone from there to Ireland. He followed, and finally discovered in them his long-lost family ! They had thought him massacred at the time of their flight, and he had given up all hopes of their being alive. His eldest son was married, and Gabriel found a grandson awaiting him (born in 1700), and his son, who was then a clergyman, and evidently a man of great ability, soon after became Dean of Killalla, and had the pleasure of seeing his own son in due course made Dean of Dublin—the father and son both being deans at the same time, almost a record ! They appear to have carried off from their estates in Guienne

nothing but the clothes they stood up in, a good sum of money, and the family coat-of-arms. The Dean of Dublin died in 1746, and was buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral. My grandfather was his grandson, and settled a few years after his ordination in Fannet, a place almost as wild and unsophisticated as Gartan. He was a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, a classical scholar and author, and much given to reading and study, so the solitude of the place appealed to him ; but it must have required courage of a high order also for a man to sleep peacefully in his bed there with the terrible warning of his predecessor's fate before him.

This tragedy came about in the wild days of the 1798 rebellion, when the Rector of Fannet was also a Resident Magistrate and had dealt sternly with the rebels brought before him. He was not in his own house when the attack was made in vengeance for the sentences he had passed on Fenians, but in the house of a friend where he had gone for one night. When darkness fell this house was surrounded by an immense crowd of armed men, who demanded that he should be brought out to them, and preparations were made to burn the house to

the ground with everyone in it, if he was not delivered over to his savage enemies. There was no chance of calling for help (no telephones or wireless then) and the place was isolated, so the terrible alternative had to be faced, and the unfortunate man was turned out to the howling mob. It is said that the daughters of the house, in terror for their own lives, burnt his hands off the banisters with hot irons as he clung to them, and the moment the hall-door closed upon him a hundred pikes did the rest! So when my father was a boy guns were mounted at all the windows of his home to give a warm reception to any armed band that might appear, but none ever came, and my grandfather and all his family were beloved with all the warmth those Irish hearts are capable of feeling, in that land of contrasts, where the clouds and rainstorms that darken the mountains, while the sun shines on river and lake, are typical of the qualities of devoted affection and implacable hatred to be found in the natures of the people.

My grandfather was a stern parent (very unlike his son, who was our best friend and chum!): his boys were never allowed to sit in his presence without permission, and always

had to address him as "Sir"—not an unusual custom in those days. "Autres temps, autre mœurs."

We journeyed from Gartan to Fannet in jaunting-cars and stayed with an old brother and sister (Hannah and Robert Patton) who had a large house on Mulroy in which they had spent their whole lives. They had lost an elder brother, one of the hard-drinking men of a more foolish age, who would polish off a bottle of whisky a day without giving any signs of it. But as he advanced in years he was warned by his doctor that he must reduce his consumption of alcohol, and a promise was forced from him that he would imbibe only one glass a day, so the cunning old reprobate had a special glass of immense proportions made for him, and as he sipped he whispered to it: "Blessed be the mouth that blew ye!"

The seals of Mulroy used to delight us, swimming after the boat as we fished: my father caught trout again on Kindrum Lough as he did when a boy, and we climbed a mountain to get a view of Tory Island, nine miles off the coast, where the tax-collector never dares to land, and went down to the northern shore to bathe there, and be able to say we

had "swum in the Atlantic." It was a happy, merry time, full of glorious surprises and new experiences.

In this part of Ireland is a rectory house that is haunted, and there is a story told of a parson who came to preach there for some society. He was asked if he was superstitious, and if he would mind sleeping in a room that was said to be haunted. He said he should not mind at all, and the next morning he was questioned as to whether he had seen the ghost. "Oh, yes," he said, "I saw him, but he soon disappeared, for before going to bed I placed the collection plate on the table near me, and as soon as he appeared I took it up and held it towards him, when he immediately vanished in a great hurry and did not come back."

When my father was a boy, sheep-stealing meant a death sentence on a man convicted of it in Ireland—and I believe also in England. The consequence of this cruel punishment was that it defeated its own aim, and sheep-stealing became so common that the law had to be altered, and imprisonment substituted for the capital punishment, as juries would not convict, policemen did not care to arrest, or farmers to prosecute, when such a serious thing as the

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hanging of an unfortunate man would follow a conviction.

Marriage customs were very quaint in rural districts of this land years ago (and are probably the same now). The bride was escorted to the house of the bridegroom late at night by the whole district with shouting and firing of guns, and instead of the father of the bride giving her a "dot" the bridegroom paid the father for her with pigs, hay, or cows after the manner of the African tribes. I heard of one man who, after his engagement to a girl, saw, and much preferred, her sister. So he told her father that if he could have the younger girl instead he "would give another cow for her." The offer was refused, and if the bride was a wise woman her sister was not a frequent visitor to the newly started *ménage*!

This, my earliest tour, began probably the craving that grew in me to see more of this beautiful world of ours, and that desire has been fully gratified. A kind aunt took me first for the greater part of one winter to the Riviera—but not till after Christmas, you may be sure; no inducement would have tempted me to forgo the happy family gathering for that blessed festival! The South of France in 1881 was a land of delight. No herds of tourists

and "conducted parties," no tennis tournaments, no cars with their dust and noise. We stayed in one quaint picturesque town after another, explored all the lovely valleys behind the coast-line, and finally went from Genoa to the Italian Lakes and Switzerland. I am not anxious to dispel the memory of that glorious winter on the French Riviera by revisiting those scenes now, for, from all I hear, the atmosphere of that magic coast must be completely altered. The sun is there, and the blue sea, but so also are giant hotels, fashionably dressed crowds, snorting and bleating cars and motorcycles, and clouds of dust on the Corniche road: gone for ever must be the quaint unsophisticated local customs, the trees (where now stand houses) that fringed the shores, and the simplicity and peace of it all. Though I mention this, my first sight of foreign parts, I do not propose in this book to enter much into any descriptions of my many journeyings by land and by sea (I crossed the Bay of Biscay six times in one year!) as I have written upon most of them in books and magazines, and these little memoirs of former days are concerned with other matters, and chiefly with the *people* it has been my privilege to meet "on Life's Highway."

CHAPTER V

ON SMALL MATTERS CONCERNING GREAT POETS

A YOUNG girl sat on a log of wood endeavouring to sketch to the best of her very limited ability a picturesque thatched farm in the Isle of Wight, and a great scowling man in soft black hat and Inverness cape strode wrathfully towards her. *I* was the girl, and the formidable man was the immortal Tennyson! Directly I saw him I felt caught, for I knew how he hated people intruding on his private property, and I was fully aware that I was a trespasser. As he came up to me I looked shyly into his face, and the expression of it changed, and broke into a smile. He looked down at my crude efforts, nodded his head encouragingly two or three times, and departed. How I have wished in later years that I had spoken to him! but I was too shy to do so and he was a man of few words, so the exchange of smiles was all that I have to remember of our meeting. My



"VEX NOT THOU THE POET'S MIND"

parents had the great privilege of knowing him, having many mutual friends—the Prinseps,

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Camerons, Croziers, and others—and he was a familiar figure to me, as my brothers and sisters (Sissie, Allen, Fanny, Charles) and I were taken to Freshwater every year for three weeks during our holidays. Even if another place was selected for our annual jaunt nothing took the place of Freshwater in our hearts, and we were never satisfied unless we ended up there. We nearly always went to the same house, and, being a party of eight, filled it, and, as it was next to Mrs. Cameron's, we saw a good deal of her. She was a great character and a very clever, amusing woman. Tennyson came to see her frequently, and she was much at Farringford. On one occasion she took some friends to see him who longed for an introduction to the famous man, but he had a special little staircase to his study up which he could bolt from the drawing-room when he heard visitors approaching. Mrs. Cameron knew of this, entered quickly, and just caught sight of his coat-tails whisking towards his lair, so she called out: "Oh, Alfred, Alfred, I'm ashamed of you! I have brought these ladies to see a lion, and they only find a rude old bear."

The tourists persecuted him dreadfully. There is a summer-house on the lawn at Farring-

ford in which he used often to write, but if he left things out there he frequently found that some unscrupulous admirer had crept into the place and gone off with his pens, paper, or anything they could lay their hands on. I was shown a tree in the garden in the branches of which the poet once perceived a tourist peering down upon him, to his great wrath, as he sat beneath it! In my early morning scrambles I often saw him striding over those beautiful Freshwater downs, and I once saw him standing motionless on the edge of the cliff, wrapt in his black cloak, looking down on the Arched rock for at least half an hour¹: no doubt his mind was fixed on some of those radiant visions that have given to the world such a priceless heritage for all time.

When, later on, my husband and I spent eighteen happy, peaceful years at Yarmouth Rectory, we went many times to Farringford and enjoyed the friendship of Lord and Lady Tennyson, his son and daughter-in-law, and I always felt I was standing on holy ground there, but the poet had gone then

“To where beyond these voices there is peace.”

I will quote here a little anecdote of Tennyson and my father that was written by Mr. James

¹ See frontispiece.

May amongst other recollections in a local magazine: "My honeymoon was spent in the Isle of Wight. Whilst there a memorable impromptu meeting took place on the shore of Freshwater Bay, when two notable men came on the scene, viz. the Rev. Benjamin Maturin (afterwards Canon Maturin), vicar of my native town, Lymington, Hants, and Alfred Tennyson, Poet Laureate (afterwards Lord Tennyson), who was in residence at Farringford, close at hand. The reverend gentleman instantly recognised me as an old boy of his Church of England schools at Lymington, for it was an axiom with us all that, no matter how long a time had elapsed since we left our native place, we always made a point of having a few words with him when on holiday. As he eventually completed fifty-three years ministry there, he was in touch with successive generations—known, honoured, and revered as our Father in God. And so in his usual cheery way he exclaimed: 'Well, May, and where have you been lately?' Hearing of my recent marriage, he said: 'Oh! let me have the pleasure of joining your hands,' and he put them together with the words, 'Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder,' and he added a blessing.

Tennyson then came forward with congratulations and spoke of the beauty of the Isle of Wight. 'It is a most beautiful place; you could not have chosen a prettier for your honeymoon.' Then lifting his hat in courtly style to the bride he said, 'Madam, I wish you much happiness in your new state.' Some conversation followed, and we parted with a cordial shake of the hand and their combined sincere wishes for a happy married life—which wishes have borne fruit."

Coventry Patmore, the author of "The Angel and the Hearth" and many other beautiful poems that will long have an honoured place in English literature, passed the latter part of his life in Lymington, and though he did not take up his abode there till long after I had left my old home for a new one, when I was back there on a visit my mother got an invitation for me to go and see the Patmores with her, saying I was an admirer of his poetry and wished to have the honour of meeting him. He was a courtly, refined man, dressed with great care in rather a bygone style, and appeared much interested in the yachting adventures of myself and my husband, questioning me at considerable length on the subject.

He kindly signed his name on a linen tablecloth I kept for the autographs of friends and people whose names were famous, the letters being very carefully worked over afterwards in coloured silks so that they are permanent (it is surprising that the signature keeps its character exactly), and I recall him to mind every time I use it, with his refined face, short pointed beard, and rather long hair. Mrs. Patmore showed me in their dining-room a large replica of the poet's portrait by Sargent, which is now in the National Portrait Gallery.

While living at Yarmouth, I.W., my husband and I went over on several occasions to see Mr. and Mrs. Moulton-Barrett at Westover Manor, Calbourne, and it was with veneration that I talked with our host, as he was the brother of Elizabeth Barrett-Browning and her playmate in early childhood, sharing with her that home that she looked back to all her life with such affectionate remembrance. This wonderful woman was the queen beyond doubt of all the poetesses our country has ever produced—an English Sappho. Other women have written beautiful things, but none, in my humble opinion—as merely a lover of poetry—can come anywhere near this genius. Mrs. Hemans was a

great songstress ; Adelaide Proctor would be remembered for all time if she had never left us anything but that exquisite little poem, "The Faithful Soul" ; Mrs. Bowles wrote charmingly, but both in volume and quality they do not attain to that pedestal of fame on which sits enthroned the small elf-like woman whose miniature I saw in her brother's sanctum at Westover, taken when a child as a Cupid with wings, and again painted in a large picture grouped with that beloved brother who was drowned at Torquay, and her sister Henrietta. She was the eldest of a long family : Mr. Moulton-Barrett outlived his distinguished sister by many years, not dying till 1910, and she had passed away in 1861. When I was in Florence I went into the house where the Brownings lived and wrote for so long, and was much disappointed to find their abode was merely a flat in a high house in a very noisy street near the Pitti Palace (the Casa Guidi). I had expected to find in their Florentine home a picturesque little nest outside the city, or looking down upon it from one of the surrounding hills, embowered in a garden of roses, so that the surroundings might be in keeping with their temperaments. Picturing those two

songsters shut up in a commonplace town flat reminded me of caged larks in a London street ! Yet they spent most of their married life in that house, and she died there at the age of fifty-three.

I have an article of furniture in my possession which I value greatly on account of its distant association with one of the greatest of all our poets, and you will laugh at me for mentioning it, as the link is so slight ! Every time I play my piano I sit on a music-stool covered with exquisitely fine tapestry. This was worked for my husband's grandfather by Lady Lovelace, the only child of Lord Byron, to whom he dedicated the third canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"—"Ada ! Sole daughter of my house and heart." The stool and work remain just as they were when the gift was sent (I suppose at least eighty years ago), and my fancy often conjures up those "young blue eyes," as her father called them, watching the stitches grow into that intricate pattern !

YARMOUTH HARBOUR, I.W.

By MAUDE SPEED



CHAPTER VI

OLD TIMES IN THE CHURCHES

OH! the blessed peace that reigned in the country before the coming of motor vehicles of all kinds, because *then* only the carts and carriages and horses of the immediate neighbourhood were about the local roads, *now* huge lorries and tradesmen's vans and pleasure cars come from all parts, so that frequently, in the south of Hampshire, we see the name of a Birmingham firm on a passing lorry, or a charabanc laden with tourists from Southsea is met in the lanes of Berkshire! Also those terrible motor cycles tear at all hours of the night through sleeping villages with open exhausts (to save a few pence in the week), their riders quite indifferent to other people's comfort—and, indeed, no light sleeper can live on any high road now unless he happens to be deaf!

Especially on Sunday mornings was there a holy "Sabbath calm" reigning. My home was

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just outside the town, meadows and fields sloped gently away from its garden to distant trees over which the blue downs of the Isle of Wight were outlined, and just before 8 o'clock could be heard the Angelus bell rung in the old church tower—not for any service, but merely to announce that it was Sunday, and because it *had* rung at that time for several hundred years—just as the Shriving bell rang at 10 o'clock on every Shrove Tuesday, though had a crowd of penitents come in answer to its summons they would have found no priest waiting to hear their confessions and give them absolution !

In my childhood's days early services and the frequent celebration of the Holy Communion had not become the rule in the Church. Once a month was the general practice, and that on the first Sunday of each month and "after the morning service" ! It all sounds very shocking to devout Church people now, but it must not be supposed that the rule then prevailing was the result of indifference to the importance of that great and chief service of all the four branches of the Catholic Church : it certainly was not on my father's part, for he laid great stress on its importance, was the

author of a most excellent and well-known book on the subject, and held frequent classes in preparation for it; but he was of opinion, with other good men of his day, that holding that sacred service only at long intervals added to its importance and solemnity. Also there were few weekday services, one on Wednesday evenings with a sermon and another with Litany on Friday mornings, but in later days, in deference to the wishes of many, Saints' days were observed with the Holy Communion Service, which was also celebrated on Sunday mornings at 8.30. On the other hand, far more visiting was done than in a good number of places I could mention at the present day, and the Vicar held little "cottage lectures" frequently in outlying parts of his parish which were much appreciated, and rounded his flock up to the church on Sundays vigorously, so what with that, and the fact that he was a most eloquent extempore preacher, who never failed to hold their attention up to the last Sunday when he addressed them (he was then nearly ninety, with the strong voice and active brain of a young man), the large church was always crowded on Sunday mornings and evenings! No wonder he had gained the name of "The

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Grand Old Man of Hampshire," though I think it was perhaps only the black sheep of his flock who knew his real worth. God alone knows to how many men and women apparently "down and out" he gave a quiet helping hand, both financially and with his kind, cheering sympathy, for he would never admit that anyone was incapable of rising out of the slough of despond into a clean and useful life once more. He—

“ Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed though right were worsted wrong
 would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.”

Order was kept in the large galleries of the church of my childhood by the sexton, who did duty on Sundays up there armed with a cane (he was known by the name of "the dog-whipper"), and frequently loud sounds of whacking were heard all over the church, followed by bellowings and the clatter of feet descending the stairs! Everyone took these demonstrations quite as a matter of course, and I suppose the boys and youths didn't mind, for they attended the services *far* more regularly than they do now—there and everywhere else. But there is no denying the truth that,

in general over the country then, the churches were in a very miserable state of dullness and apathy, and I should be sorry to see them back again as they once were. They were as bare and ugly as a meeting-house. No one ever thought of polishing the brasses, or beautifying the chancel with flowers; there were no proper ornaments, and when at Lymington real decorations for Christmas were introduced instead of great branches of holly tied with rope to the pillars by the church clerk, many old people held up their hands in horror and said we were going "headlong to Rome"! And old clergymen who were quite past work, and who made no attempt to get help from an active curate, would hold on to their livings for the sake of the stipend—though indeed it is hard to blame them as long as the crying scandal exists of a wealthy country, which sends about a quarter of a million per annum out to foreign missions, allowing the clergy of their own Church to retire, after a life's work on small pay, with no pension whatever. This disgrace to our land is, I believe, to be rectified in the near future, and in fact a scheme has begun to work already. Surely the maxim ought to be observed of "Charity begins at home," though

you may add, "It ought not to stop there," and I for one am not like the man opposed to foreign missions who whispered to the churchwarden taking the collection: "Is this for foreign missions?—because if so I give nothing." "No, don't," was the reply; "you must take something out—it's for the heathen."

There was one old parson I knew of, who lived for half a century at least in his vicarage house, doing practically nothing for his parish beyond holding a service on Sunday mornings and possibly sometimes in the afternoons, after which the church was locked for the week. He had got into such a state of senile decay that once, when reading the marriage service, he lost his place, turned over the leaves and began again in the middle of the burial service! My father was present and heard this. Finally, someone found his place for him, and started him off on the right track once more!

Private patronage was much abused in the old days. It became a proverb that the fool of the family was put into the Church, and certainly patrons presented livings to relatives and old friends' sons with apparently no care whatever as to whether they were fitted for a holy office or qualified to benefit those committed to their

care in this responsible post. Now all that is at an end, as no one can be instituted into a living without the sanction of the Bishop of the diocese, and he duly makes careful inquiries as to the character, experience, and qualifications of the candidate before consenting to the presentation.

A funny incident occurred connected with private patronage that I remember well, though it was many years ago. The patron was an enthusiastic musician, entirely devoted to his beloved art, and doubtless he thought that a parson need be none the worse as a parson for being able to take a useful part in quartettes, so after advertising the fact that he had a country living in his gift that was vacant, and would be glad to hear of applicants for it, he added, "A 'cello player preferred." Very soon in *Truth* appeared the following rhyme :

" Hey, diddle diddle ! A priest with a fiddle
Is wanted for Woltonhurst, Herts,
So if there's a good fellow
Who can play on the 'cello,
He must write to this patron of Arts."

(The names are camouflaged !) The patron secured his man—'cello and all—and a very good old fellow he turned out to be !

My half-brother, when a boy about six, did

rather a startling thing in a church. His small heart earnestly craved for a model yacht, and though he was as idolised as an only and motherless child generally is, this wish had not been gratified, so realising that church was a place where people asked for things, and money was collected for certain objects, he seized the opportunity, when immediately after the service my father had gone into the vestry, dashed up into the pulpit, and called out, "Dearly beloved brethren, I want a boat!" The retiring worshippers were amazed and scandalised, but a kind old gentleman sent him a fine one the next day, having been much amused at the original method he employed for getting what he wanted. I expect he got a whacking too, but history has not recorded that!

I can just remember seeing as a small child the last of the Prince-Bishops at my home. He was Sumner, Bishop of Winchester, and he arrived in a carriage drawn by four horses with postilions. He also brought with him two chaplains and two men-servants! It was a considerable business to put up such a party of retainers, and the chaplains were distributed amongst friends. The four horses impressed the arrival of the prelate on my memory, and also the crumbs

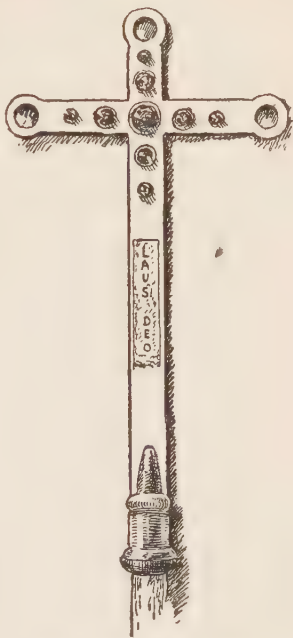
which fell from the great man's table in the form of delicacies which we secured when the pudding course came out, at the dinner party given for him! A party, by the by, used always to mean a vigil on the stairs when we were children, and a pouncing on the sweet dishes, but later on we were promoted to the dignity of coming into dessert attired in muslin dresses and sashes. That was when we were old enough to remain up for the music in the drawing-room afterwards—always a feature at our parties, as my mother was an accomplished musician (both pianist and harpist), and was the centre of a circle of musical friends.

In the heart of the New Forest a very quaint old-fashioned little church is to be seen in which are two immense pews, more like sitting-rooms, screened off from public view and fitted with fire-places and comfortable chairs. There was a third, but it was sacrificed to the public weal when an enlargement of the sacred edifice became necessary. These pews were for the use of worshippers from the three principal houses in the district, and it is said that when the magnate occupying one of them became wearied with the long discourse of the preacher he was wont to poke up his fire loudly and make

a row to show that his endurance had been tried long enough! A famous actor of a by-gone day was once asked by a parson why the theatres were always so full, and the churches so empty. He replied, "Because we act fiction as if it were truth; you preach truth as if it were fiction." Certainly sermons used to be terribly long, and often very dry and dull, but they were never as long in England, I think, as in Ireland and Scotland. There is an old story of a parson in the latter country who went on so long arguing as to what fish it was that swallowed Jonah—"It couldna' ha' been a cod-fish. . . . It couldna' ha' been a porpoise. . . ."—that an old woman, losing patience, threw a new light on the question by ejaculating, "Maybe 'twas a w'aal!"

I have referred in another chapter to the hour-glasses that were once used in churches to regulate the length of sermons. They stood on wrought-iron stands handy to the pulpit. Very few (I have been told only three) of these are now to be seen. One is in the parish church at Yarmouth, Isle of Wight. Its glass had been broken, but one of about the same date as the church (1614) now stands where the original one stood on the old hand-wrought

bracket, and should you be in that sacred little building (which contains, amongst other things, a famous statue of interest) do not depart without also seeing the handsome processional cross, made by the former rector as a parting gift to the church before retiring from the living. The cross is of brass, inlaid with hammered silver, the "jewels" with which it is set are pebbles and agates of great beauty, found by him on the shore at Alum Bay and polished by an Island lapidary, and the staff is of Island oak. So the whole thing is an Isle of Wight product and quite unique.



PROCESSIONAL CROSS

My readers will doubtless recall the unprecedented state of affairs in 1914, when, just before the War came upon us and swept all other questions aside, the suffragettes were taking militant measures to enforce their claims on the notice of the public, and did not even draw

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the line at the sacred edifices of our land, which were in danger of attack and mutilation at their hands. In consequence of this danger, and our anxiety in Milford (Hants) to guard the glorious Norman building which we are so proud to possess, a watch committee was formed, a bell-tent was erected close to the porch in which men took turns to guard it by night, and women had the watches of the day-time assigned to them. In connection with this scheme a curious little incident occurred to me which caused much amusement at the time. The attackers were wont to bring the hammers and saws—with which they broke windows, destroyed paintings, etc.—in workmanlike *leather bags*, and the guardians were especially warned to be on the look-out for those, whether in the hands of a man or a woman. Imagine my consternation therefore, when I was in charge of the church, at seeing a strange man walking towards the door with a leather bag in his hand! I immediately barred his way and said: “I am acting as guardian to this church, and no one carrying a bag is allowed to enter it.” “But, madam,” said he, “I have come to tune the organ!” “I daresay,” I replied, “but you don’t come in with that bag till I

have examined its contents.” He then meekly handed the bag over, and I turned it out, and found that his statement was true, so he was allowed to pass !

I will conclude this chapter by relating what I think is the shortest sermon on record, and a great contrast to the long-winded discourses in vogue at the time it was preached. I cannot recall the text, but the sermon was announced to be on man’s life from birth to death, and this was it: “ I will ask you to consider, my brethren, these three things—

Man’s entrance into the world—naked and bare.
Man’s passage through the world—full of
trouble and care.

Man’s exit from the world—to God knows
where.

Think over this, and it will do you good.” I am not certain, but I believe the preacher was the old friend and playmate of my father’s boyhood, “ Willie ” McGee, a man of great brilliance and wit, who finished his distinguished career by becoming Archbishop of York.

CHAPTER VII

ABOUT HEROES OF OLD FIGHTS

THE number of people now living who have actually talked of those immortal battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo with men who fought in them is getting very small. As I have done so, and everything connected with them appeals to an Englishman's pride of country, perhaps even the little I have to narrate may be of interest, for there never has been, and never will be others on land or sea to equal them, either in the wonderful pageant of grim, awe-inspiring, picturesque reality, or in their *absolute finality*. I suppose in those two qualities the only one that can compare with Trafalgar as a sea-fight is the battle of Lepanto in 1571 between the Turks and allied Christian fleets—those of the Pope, Austria, and Spain—under the command of Don Juan of Austria, half-brother of Phillip II of Spain. When that stern fanatic—doubtless

encouraged by the complete victory of Lepanto—seventeen years afterwards sent the greatest fleet that had then ever sailed the seas (129 vessels, each of them a vision of beauty) for



SHIP OF THE ARMADA

the invasion of England, the licking we gave the Spaniards was spread out over several engagements, none really decisive. The fleets of the three nations engaged at Trafalgar were little more than half of the Armada, numbering only seventy all told, of which thirty-three were British. Nelson's other fine fights—the Nile

and Copenhagen amongst them—were on a smaller scale than his last. Coming down to our own times, the battle of Jutland in 1916 was a tremendous affair, but unfortunately not fought to a finish. The battle of the Falkland Isles left the few survivors of the enemy's fleet in no doubt on *that* question, but the number of ships engaged was small—only a side-show as regards the great navies of the two nations—whereas at Trafalgar every big ship of the countries concerned seemed to converge to that particular spot off the coast of Spain. I may mention that two vessels which took part in that great battle still survive—the *Victory*, Nelson's flagship (a three-decker), and the *Impacable* (a two-decker).

And equally great in the annals of the world's big fights was Waterloo; I imagine the most remarkable battle ever fought on land for its complete decisiveness. In the Great War we took over four years to bring about that defeat of our enemy which was accomplished at Waterloo in eight hours! Of course the gigantic scale and the many nations mixed up in this last unparalleled campaign made it unwieldy and protracted, and the distance of the combating forces from each other (so different from

the fights of other days—Wellington said, “Shoot when you see the whites of your enemy’s eyes!”), and the great mechanisms of artillery, aeroplanes, tanks, etc., makes the fighting of the present and future another thing, infinitely more devastating and widespread and terrible in its effects, but lacking in the glory and interest of the old battles, which stirred the imagination of even the most peace-loving individuals. I was quite a small child when my great-uncle, Major John Daniell of the 7th Hussars, came to visit my parents. He had fought with his regiment as a young man at Waterloo, and I had been much interested in listening to my mother and aunt speaking of an achievement he was said to have performed there, namely that of carrying off a small Frenchman by the scruff of his neck and landing him behind the lines as prisoner. He was a man of powerful physique and immense height—tradition says he was the biggest man who fought there. No one knew this little pitcher with long ears had taken any notice of the story, but I determined to hear more about it, so, when my mother brought him up to the nursery to see her nestlings, everyone was astonished when I squeaked out, “Tell us how

you carried off the Frenchman.” “ The Frenchman? Oh! Why, like this,” the big man answered, and tossed me up to the ceiling! And that was all the information I could get on the subject. Later in the fight his horse was killed under him and he was wounded, but not badly, for soon afterwards he was in Paris, which we had occupied after the victory, and there distinguished himself by giving a lesson in manners to a French officer. Naturally, relations were somewhat strained between the officers of the two nations; the French lost no opportunity of insulting the English in order to provoke a duel, and Frenchmen being then (and now) past masters of the rapier and small sword, a number of our officers were killed in these encounters. One day Uncle John was reading a newspaper when a Frenchman came up and snatched it out of his hand! Instead of calling out his assailant, he walked over to him, seized him by the chin and, forcing open his mouth, spat into it, remarking, “ If you consider yourself insulted, sir, I am here.” As the Frenchman did not like the look of Uncle John’s long cavalry sword, he refused to stand up to him. This lesson caused the French officers to be more careful about insulting the

English, and but little duelling occurred afterwards.¹

Another old Waterloo veteran lived in my native town—Sergeant Coombes—and my mother took us to see him once, and tried to draw him out on the subject of his experiences, but he was not good at descriptions. My brother Allen (now Major Maturin), was highly delighted at being allowed to handle the sword with which he said he had cut down Frenchmen, and paid him more than one visit afterwards on his own initiative, to wield the sword and be instructed in the various passes.

I had in my possession a very small but highly valued relic of Waterloo—a lock of chestnut hair from the tail of “Copenhagen,” the charger which the Duke of Wellington rode during the whole of that eventful day. It was given to my father by Samuel Wise, head groom to the Duke, who had the horse under his care till its death in 1830. As the skeleton of

¹ One of Major Daniell’s brothers—Captain Sir William Daniell—had the honour of bringing King William IV and Queen Adelaide to England in his man-o’-war. His other brothers were Ralph Allen, the writer’s grandfather (who married Sarah, only daughter of Colonel Collet Mawhood, 2nd Life Guards), Thomas the eldest (who is referred to in Chapter VIII), Philip, and Capt. Edward Daniell, 75th Gordon Highlanders. His six sisters were Lady Gossett, Mrs. Woolriche, Mrs. Lys, Mrs. East, Mrs. Stewart, and Mrs. Bisset.

“Marengo,” Napoleon’s horse, is in the United Service’s Museum, Whitehall, and it possessed no relic whatever of “Copenhagen,” I gave my souvenir to be exhibited in the Wellington case, where it can be seen by any who care to look for it. How strange it seems that both the horses carrying the two great leaders of the armies should have lived through those eight hours of carnage and slaughter unscathed!

From Waterloo it is going back another ten years to Trafalgar, but I heard a good deal about that from a dear old friend—Admiral of the Fleet Sir George Sartorius, who was a young midshipman of fifteen when in the battle, and lived to be its last survivor, dying at the age of ninety-seven, or close upon that. I was a great favourite of his (he always called me his “little midshipman”), and I very much value, and often wear, a pretty pendant he sent me as a birthday gift, addressed to “My little Midshipman from her old Admiral.” He used to take me out sketching with him, and I always got him to chat about old times at sea. In the great battle he saw the *Victory*’s mainmast carried away. The noise was terrific, as the ships were all so closely engaged, and the decks soon became a shambles with dis-

membered bodies and dying men. The ship with which the one he was on fought a duel was so close alongside that twice he took aim to pick off the captain, and had not the heart to shoot, "for he was so like my own father."

The state of affairs on board a man-o'-war at that time after a battle was appalling. There were no sick-bays, or proper hospital cots (Nelson himself, we know, died in the *Victory's* cock-pit), no trained men nurses, no anæsthetics, and surgery was in a very rough and undeveloped state. In the absence of anæsthetics all that could be done for the poor wretches was to drug them with the ship's rum before undergoing amputations and such major operations. Badly wounded men had only half a chance, and desperately wounded men none whatever, neither was there anywhere to put them, or anyone to look after them, so the only thing (and the kindest) to do was to put them overboard in weighted hammocks as if already dead! Sir George told me he had seen many hammocks go over the side quivering and wriggling! One man was heard to moan out, "I'm not dead," but the answer was, "The doctor says you are dead, and he knows best," and over he went! Whether in peace or war,

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the navy in those days was a pretty rough place for a young boy to find himself in. Floggings were frequent and severe, and the press-gang raids to get recruits was a great terror in the land. I knew an old fellow who had found himself in the navy by that means. His own account was that he and two other lads were out in the woods at Buckland (near Lymington) birds' nesting, when some rough sailors sprang upon them and said: "What are you young devils doing here? You are only in mischief; come along with us—we'll soon teach you to behave yourselves." It was useless to protest that they were doing no harm, and only out for a little holiday: they were hustled into carts, forced on board a ship sailing from Portsmouth, and it was years before they saw their homes again. This was many years after Trafalgar, and the press-gang system went on for a long time. In our war with Russia in 1855 the fleet was for the first time manned without impressment. It was wonderful that any man could pass through such a moral ordeal as life on any of those splendid sailing ships was then—Royal Navy or Mercantile Marine—and come out in middle age quite refined and even (some of them) religious. In

as." Nelson and many of the famous captains began life under the peaceful roofs of country vicarages, and never forgot the lessons and prayers learnt there at their mothers' knees, but many old sea-dogs have told me what rude awakenings to the wickedness and cruelty of life they had gone through when plunged first into a big ship's fo'castle or gunroom, as the case may be, with, on the first voyage and often subsequent ones, sea-sickness to add to the horrors, and frequently "a good rope's ending" applied by a brutal mate or bo'sun as a cure for it! It is curious how some, hardened old salts even, never quite got over sea-sickness. My uncle, Admiral Castle, told me that after a long spell ashore he always had an attack of it going down Channel, and Nelson himself, that topmost hero of the seas, was much troubled by it.

My old friend—Trafalgar's last survivor—devoted the latter end of his long life much to public good. I heard him say once that he



THE "IMPLACABLE" AS SHE IS TO-DAY—A TRAINING SHIP FOR BOYS

destruction of men—even enemies. I must relate a little incident which amused us much at the time, and shows how anxious he was to be of use to his fellow-creatures. My father went to his house to ask if he would take the

chair at an important meeting to be held a few evenings later. He thought for a minute and then said he would. "But you can't, Admiral," said Lady Sartorius; "we are dining out that night." "I have thought of that," he answered. "It is a private affair, therefore of no importance; this meeting is a matter that affects the good of the public, so the dinner must get on without me," and in spite of the annoyance of Lady Sartorius (in which my father quite sympathised) he was adamant in his decision, and the dinner party was deprived of its chief guest!

Lancelot Speed's beautiful line drawing of the *Implacable* is from a water-colour painting which he did when down at Falmouth two years ago. She is the *only* ship left afloat that fought at Trafalgar, for, as you all know, the *Victory* is to be kept now permanently in dry dock at Portsmouth.

CHAPTER VIII

ON SOCIAL MATTERS—OLD AND NEW

I HAD the advantage of spending some weeks at Brighton during two winters after I came out, with old family friends, and had a most delightful chaperon, for the many balls I attended there, in the Dowager Viscountess Cardross, who, though quite an old lady, enjoyed all social gaieties as much as the young folk. I knew Mr. Ashbury, Conservative M.P. for Brighton, and went to many of his far-famed entertainments at his house in Eastern Terrace. He was a very wealthy old bachelor who has left a name behind him to be long remembered in yachting circles, as his fine schooner *The Cambria* twice made a gallant but unsuccessful attempt to regain the America Cup that is still eluding us. Before going to a dinner party there once with Lady Cardross he told me he had an interesting and well-known man coming

to him for the week-end, and he would introduce him to me. His lion turned out to be a relation of my own (my mother's first cousin), Sir Ralph Allen Gosset, who was for nearly forty-nine years the Serjeant-at-Arms to the House of Commons, and familiar to all the readers of *Punch* as the black-beetle in the Parliamentary pictures by Harry Furniss. It was a pleasure to renew his acquaintance, for my first meeting with him had not greatly impressed me, as I was a baby in my nurse's arms! The Gossets had a very remarkable record of three generations' unbroken service to Parliament: this man's father, Sir William Gosset, was Serjeant-at-Arms for thirty years, and when Sir Ralph Allen passed away himself in 1885 his son succeeded him, both in the post and in the great popularity the family had always enjoyed in the House. In each instance the son had received a training as Assistant-Serjeant under his father, and then as Deputy-Serjeant.

We talked much of our mutual relatives and forbears, which I am afraid interested him more than it did me, for few young people care to think of those who have preceded them—that is a thing that comes with more mature years. As his reminiscences dealt with some rather

remarkable facts, and with a man who made his mark on our country, perhaps I may be allowed to enlarge a little upon them, though they lie far behind that portion of Life's Highway we are traversing now. He recalled that Brighton had been the favourite resort of the Prince Regent, and in his palace, the Royal Pavilion, he held all sorts of revelries, and the "bucks and beaux" of the Regency started that high gambling at cards which was the ruin of so many of them, and, amongst others, of the head of our family on my mother's side, my great-uncle, Thomas Daniell, who ran through a splendid fortune inherited as eldest son, and lost for ever that fine ancestral home—Trelissick, on the west bank of the Fal, with most of the land between Falmouth and Truro. He married Mary Osbaldeston, sister of the famous Yorkshire squire of hunting and racing proclivities whose biography has been published lately, and she appears to have been as reckless and extravagant as her husband, for tradition says that she spent £10,000 on new furniture soon after her marriage! The great fortune that was thus dispersed had come partly from the discovery on the estate of large and rich tin mines, and partly from the marriage two

generations earlier of Daniell of Trelissick to the niece of Ralph Allen, the owner of that splendid house and demesne up above Bath called Prior Park (the house was finished in 1740). He made a good deal of his immense wealth by starting mail-coaches, and mounted postmen, instead of the walking men who alone carried the letters and parcels previously. He entertained on a lavish scale in his fine home, and, being without children of his own, two favourite nieces were much with him.* One married Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, the other, my maternal ancestor, and each brought to their respective husbands a large dower. Prior Park is now a Roman Catholic college.

The flourishing town of Weymouth really owes its existence to Ralph Allen, for having discovered the unknown little fishing village himself he built a house there and posted down in his coach and four whenever he felt the need of sea air. His friends the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester heard of it from him and set the fashion of going there, thus bringing it to royal notice and patronage, and very soon it was growing almost as fast as "Brighthelmstone," the Brighton of to-day—and this brings us

back to that "London-by-the-Sea" as it has been called, from our digression.

No town could possess a more delightful building for large balls than this fortunate place has in its Pavilion. I was at one given by the 5th Lancers that was something to remember! There were 1,500 people who danced without uncomfortable crowding in three fine rooms with bands in each, and there were also three supper-rooms. The scene on arrival was unique, as the gardens through which the carriages drove to the great entrance hall were all lighted by torches held by mounted Lancers. I also twice attended large fancy-dress balls there, held in that most appropriate setting. The rooms have never lost their regal character, and the great hanging crystal chandeliers that light them are the same that illuminated the Prince Regent's festivities. London balls had not the same fascination for me. I was often with cousins in Town, and went to many dances there in private houses and also at the Metropole, but I preferred those in country houses, at Brighton, and the military balls at Southsea. There was always too much of a crush in Town. In Ireland once, at a military ball at Drogheda, the friends I was

with stayed so late that it was 6 A.M. when we reached home, after a long drive in a large covered wagonette (a merry house-party of high-spirited young people, *and chaperon*), so on arrival we voted it was much too late to go to bed on such a fine morning, changed our clothes and played tennis till breakfast! How untiring youth is!

One of the strangest balls I ever attended was at Syra, an island in the Grecian Archipelago. My husband and I had arrived there in a large cargo steamer belonging to the Leyland Line. Her crew and officers numbered thirty-eight, so with forty on board I was the only woman. The cruise out there and to Constantinople and other interesting places was given us through the influence of my brother-in-law, one of the five directors of the line. We therefore had introductions to the leading merchants and agents at every place we touched at—the letters to them all preceding our arrival. When we landed at Syra we found great arrangements had been made for our entertainment. M. Voucotopolos, one of the chief citizens of Syra and quite a magnate there, drove us about all over the island, showed us the fine white marble buildings of the old town, and insisted

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on our presence at a great ball in a public hall, for which all Syra society had been preparing for some time. We dined at his house first, and were amazed at the scale of magnificence we found in vogue at the dance. The toilettes of the ladies, the floor, the music, and the fine supper were not at all the sort of thing we expected to find in this Grecian isle. But what made the whole show so remarkable to us was the language, for hardly anyone there spoke anything but Greek, programmes and supper menus were written in it, and the whole crowd were chattering in an unknown tongue to us, for, though my husband's knowledge of ancient Greek enabled him to read most of the printed matter he came across, he could not understand the modern pronunciation of it. One lady spoke English, and a few of the men a little English or French (our host had brought a French-speaking clerk with him on our drives as interpreter). But they all danced fairly well and with great vigour, and I was enjoying myself immensely when a prolonged blast from our steamer's syren came as a signal that she was ready to start. It was pouring in torrents and half a gale was blowing, but we had to put off in a rickety caique manned by Greek oars-

men and row to the steamer lying some distance off the island. We got on board with all our evening toggery drenched with rain and salt water, but the captain said we were lucky to have arrived at all, as those Greek watermen are terrible cut-throats and thieves, and he thought putting out to sea with them on a dark rough night was a risky business!

The dance music of the old order of things was so beautiful that it was worth listening to alone, apart from the dancing. What would Strauss or Waldteufel say if they could enter a dance-hall of to-day and hear the hideous discordant noises made by the jazz bands, and the uninspiring repetition and monotony of the syncopated tunes, only fit for the dancing of the poor niggers from whom we have thought fit to borrow them! With such music no wonder that the dances are lacking in the grace and swing of the "Manola" and "Blue Danube" days, and that the dresses are well suited to the nigger tunes (now I shall get my face scratched), for the tight short skirts to the knees just remind me of those made out of sacks by the missionaries to the Cannibal Islands to hide the nakedness of their girl converts! Balls in former days were far more

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frequent and more elaborate than in this epoch when few, except the Hunt balls, come up to the old standard of splendour. There are plenty of little informal dances given (*we* had any number of those too), but I rarely hear of a big affair in a large town or country house, probably because everything is so much more costly now, and servants might object to the extra work and longer hours entailed, and go off in a body the day before! I have heard of things like that happening, and hostesses are naturally averse to risking such a fiasco.

I don't know when exactly the chaperon ceased to exist, and girls took to going about with "any old thing" they can pick up, but to wiseacres who have seen much of life, and know well what human nature is, it seems an extraordinary procedure for damsels, who have only lately left the schoolroom, to drive off alone to a dance with a young man, in perhaps his own car without even a chauffeur, and often for long distances over lonely country roads! I allude to *young* girls especially, the older ones may know what they are about—or *think* they do, poor little things, till a crisis comes, and then—

" There follows a mist and a weeping rain,
And life is never the same again."

Surely it is playing with fire? Perhaps they like fire, and it certainly is a pleasant thing to warm one's hands at, but it has a way of suddenly getting out of hand, and is the same element that has burnt up worlds before now! If there is no fire in the matter, or thought of it, then the only conclusion I must arrive at is that man's nature is undergoing a change, that it is not the same as it always has been up to now, and that I must no longer dismiss with a contemptuous sneer the theory that there will come a time when the human race will die out, and the last living man will one day stand alone on the face of this earth—for that is what we must be leading up to!

CHAPTER IX

ABOUT SOME FAMOUS MEN

DURING the 'nineties I was much in London chaperoning my youngest sister-in-law (now Mrs. Tayler Bullock) who came out after her brothers and sisters had flown from the nest, and my mother-in-law had become too delicate for balls and entertainments entailing late hours. As I loved dancing as much as she did, this arrangement suited us both, and my husband, with his delightful good nature, always encouraged everything that added to my pleasure in life. I was asked once to make one of a *partie-carré* at a dinner given at the Savoy, and the young man who was told off especially to amuse me seemed so preoccupied and in such a brown study that I could not get along in conversation with him at all, and glanced at him several times, wondering if he had quite all his buttons on, or what other reason could account for his being so dreadfully dull. His

cousin, guessing this, said to me, " You ask him about the wonderful discovery he has made. His head is full of it and he is going to astonish the world shortly." So I begged him to tell me all about it, and when he began on the subject, and saw the interest I took in it, his abstraction vanished and he became an animated man full of enthusiasm, for this was none other than Signor Marconi, whose name was soon to be known all over the world, and whose marvellous discoveries of the wonders that electricity can produce have gone far towards making this twentieth century what it is. Little did I foresee as he talked to me what was to result from those inspirations that had come to him. That people in houses, from palaces to cottages, all over the world, would before long be listening to things taking place hundreds, and even thousands of miles away, and that amongst other things, and best of all, ships in distress could call for help far out in the middle of the Atlantic, and, giving exact position, could get assistance and save the lives of all those on board. It makes me laugh now when I think of the sceptical way in which I questioned him about other currents of electricity interfering with the messages, and of the

way in which mountains might obstruct the mysterious flights of those messages, and towns with their electric light works and telegraph offices confuse their passage. Finally, seeing that I was really interested, he asked if I would like to come to his flat after dinner and see the apparatus and its manner of working, for which he had that day refused an offer of £20,000 from the Post Office. I gladly acquiesced and got the other two to come also, which they did rather unwillingly as they had set their hearts on a music-hall show ! He explained the whole thing and sent his cousin down into the cellar to talk to him at the top of the house to show me how perfectly it worked. All the same, I advised him to accept the £20,000, and reminded him that " a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," but he shook his head and said he should get *much* more, only that he was very anxious that England should have his invention, so would wait a bit before offering it to other countries. I asked what he meant to do with the money when he got it, and he replied promptly : " Spend every penny of it in making other discoveries. I am only at the beginning of what I *know* electricity is capable of doing." Years after this, when the world

was at his feet, Signor Marconi was in the Isle of Wight and came to see us at Yarmouth Rectory, and I crossed over in the steamer with him to Lymington. He talked with great interest of that dinner on the eve of his fame, and told me something of the remarkable career he had had since then, how he had been received in private audience twice by the Pope and three times by the King of Italy, and many others of the kings and rulers of Europe. Marconi's face reminded me strongly of the pictures I had seen of Pope Leo XIII. There was the same shaped nose and general expression. I never saw His Holiness, but during his papacy I was at Rome and in the Vatican, and all the pictures I saw of him there conveyed the same idea of far-seeing judgment, kindness, determination, and subtlety.

About this time I came across another very remarkable man, though in quite a different way, yet with a certain amount of genius that was at the back of his great success. This was Mr. John M. Cook, the head of that enormous tourist organisation which has made his name familiar in every corner of the world and to people of every nation. I was introduced to him by his old friends Mr. and Lady Emily

Harper when attending the private view of an exhibition of Mr. Harper's fine water-colour paintings. My friends knew that my husband and I were just planning a tour to Palestine and Syria and asked Mr. Cook to help me with his advice. I fully realised what a piece of luck this introduction was to me, and asked if he would come and see me at my father-in-law's house in Devonshire Place. He did so, and stayed to tea and had a long talk about the places we ought to visit and things we ought to see, and finally said he would give us a letter from him to take with us that he thought we should find useful. This was addressed to any persons or agents with whom he was connected, saying we were his personal friends, and desiring them to do everything possible for our "comfort and economy." It was nothing short of a talisman in our hands! Syrian hotel proprietors gave us the best rooms in their houses, and would hardly be persuaded to take payment at all for them, and in no case would they accept more than their very lowest prices for the cheapest accommodation. When camping we had the finest tents and the best horses procurable, and in a thousand other ways we travelled under the most agreeable conditions

everywhere owing to the magical charm of that letter. On our return I got the fine white-bearded old gentleman to come again to Devonshire Place, and told him of the wonderful things his introduction had done for us—which amused, but did not surprise him !

A kinsman of my husband's, who was an old schoolfellow and intimate friend of Sir Augustus Harris, the famous manager of Drury Lane, once asked me if I would like to go to the annual Baddeley Cake supper on January 6 at that theatre. Of course I said I would, so he wrote to "Gus" who at once sent not only invitations to the supper for us both, but also a box for the performance first. This entertainment originated long years ago in the kindness of one Baddeley, who left a small sum of money to provide a cake (and I think a bottle of wine) for the refreshment of the company playing at Drury Lane Theatre every Twelfth Night. From this small beginning the feast has grown into a big and elaborate banquet on the stage after the house has emptied. It was a gay scene. The cake was cut, the founder of the festivities honoured, and then in an incredibly short time (for "many hands make light work") the tables were whisked away and we danced on the

stage for half the night. "Gus" came and sat with us at supper, and I danced several times with him and found him an interesting and amusing companion. What glorious days in the theatre world those last two decades of the nineteenth century were! At the Gaiety Kate Vaughan, Connie Gilchrist, Nellie Farren, and Fred Leslie were bright stars still shining (in the early 'eighties at any rate), Sylvia Gray and Lettie Lind were dancing, Charles Wyndham and Violet Cameron were favourites, Arthur Roberts and the two Macs were singing at the halls, and those incomparable six—Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, the Bancrofts and the Kendalls—were drawing crowded houses nightly, year after year. Do you remember the Bancrofts in "Sweethearts," the Kendalls in "Diplomacy," Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth and Beatrice, and Henry Irving in "The Bells," and "The Lyons Mail"? Also that wonderful actress, Sarah Bernhardt, was often over here fascinating us with her sinuous movements and silvery voice.

Opéra comique was at its zenith then, Gilbert and Sullivan were giving us one after the other of light operas which have never been equalled, before or since—"H.M.S. *Pinafore*," "Patience," and "The Mikado," are all delight-

ful, also "The Mascotte" by Audan, my favourite of all, Planquette's "Les Cloches de Corneville," with Violet Cameron and pretty Florence St. John in it, and a little later Lionel Monckton's "Cingalee," in which Huntly Wright and Gracie Leigh were so clever. And then came "Chu Chin Chow," quite the gem of *this* century, in scenery, words, and music equal to any of the delightful musical comedies of the past. Indeed these latter days are not without interest, though we have not such performers of outstanding merit as in that enchanted era. Speaking merely as a theatre-lover and not as a critic, I may be permitted to say that the acting of M. Maurice Moscovitch as Shylock (about eight years ago) struck me as the finest performance I have ever seen on any stage, and I only wish he would visit our shores more frequently. In *révue* Cicely Courtneidge and Jack Hulbert together, and George Robey and Sir Harry Lauder are all qualified to make the proverbial cat laugh, and in spite of the sex-problem craze we do get some very fine plays. "The Farmer's Wife" and its sister (daughters of the same father), "Yellow Sands," are splendid comedies, brimming over with real clean wit and fun, and "Romance," to mention

another out of many, had a deservedly long run. Some few years ago Mr. Matheson Lang was splendid in the name part of "Mr. Wu." "Buntz pulls the Strings" was brimful of delicious humour, and Mr. Lawrence Irving (whose death on board the *Empress of Ireland*, when she foundered after a collision, was such a loss to the stage) gave a memorable performance in "The Typhoon."

I met that versatile actor, Sir Herbert Beerbohm-Tree once at a fancy-dress ball given by my husband's half-sister, Lady De la Rue, at her house in Cadogan Square. I was standing near her when he entered in ordinary dress-clothes. She pointed an upbraiding finger at him, and said: "Pray, what do you call yourself?" He quickly replied: "Oh, dear lady! Such a misfortune has happened. I came as a mutton cutlet, but I've lost my frill on the way!"

Long ago I was taken to see a famous man who was playing the Vicar of Wakefield with Ellen Terry in "Olivia," the first play I ever saw. This was Mr. Herman-Vesin. I made his acquaintance years afterwards, and went with a friend to tea at his flat more than once. He told me the most disconcerting thing that

had ever happened to him on the stage was when he was acting with Irving and at the climax of a very tragic piece Irving had to exclaim, "My heart is dead." Just after he uttered it, a loud voice from the gallery shouted, "Rub 'is pore feet"! Another interruption occurred during a play that was falling very flat when a doleful voice groaned out from aloft, "Oh Lord! My eighteenpence!"—it nearly upset the whole company and audience.

A very brief and momentary meeting with a man famous throughout the world remains in my memory like a clear little snapshot. I was in the Paddock at Goodwood with an old friend, Mr. James Weatherby, Secretary of the Jockey Club and a familiar figure to all race-goers. His merry face, with short, grey, pointed beard (always under a white top hat) was greeted warmly by everyone from the Prince of Wales to the youngest jockey. As we stood there together Fred Archer rode in from winning the Goodwood Cup amidst the cheers of the multitude, on that splendid horse St. Simon, led by its owner, the Duke of Portland. I suppose no jockey ever attained to the fame of that lean, spare man with his marvellous hands. I don't know how his wins per year compare with those

of Steve Donoghue, Gordon Richards, and other leading jockeys of later years, but in 1885 Fred Archer stood on a pinnacle apart from all others. In those days men sat their horses like men, and not like hunched-up monkeys ! I can remember when that ridiculous posture was introduced by Tod Sloan, an American jockey, and I suppose the men (or the horses) found it an improvement for it quickly caught on and became the vogue. I can see Fred Archer now as he rode towards me, calm and unflushed by the effort of that long race, though the glossy black satin coat of the horse was flecked with foam, and his nostrils were distended with the exertion of that prolonged gallop. After the victor had dismounted Mr. Weatherby brought me up to shake hands and congratulate him, and we had just a moment's talk ere he was swept away by a crowd of admirers. The tragic end of this popular idol impressed the brief meeting with him still more on my memory, for a year afterwards, when at the height of his success and only twenty-nine years old, the poor fellow shot himself. Too severe wasting to keep his weight down for riding affected his head, and I think it was after riding second in the Cambridgeshire that the tragedy happened.

CHAPTER X

REMINISCENCES OF COWES WEEK

FOR a long period (indeed from the year in which we were married) my husband and I rarely missed spending a few days during Cowes week, anchored off the town in our little yacht, one of the great fleet of about 400 vessels of all sizes and rigs, from the big cruiser guarding the royal yacht to the little half-rater on board of which the owner slept under an improvised tent formed by the mainsail or a tarpaulin hung over the boom. That scene at Cowes is unique. The forest of masts by day, the hundreds of riding-lights at night, the great racing yachts tacking and swirling hither and thither like giant seagulls and as white and graceful as they, during those tense five minutes between the guns, or tearing up past the roadstead before the wind with spinnakers boomed out, and flying jibs drawing, the subdued sounds coming over the water from the shore of

music and the distant hum of voices, and the gentle soothing movement of the boat—all this and much else combines to make Cowes week a thing apart from all other regattas or water carnivals, either on river or sea. The 8 A.M. gun goes, and up to the masthead runs every burgee of that vast fleet ; the sunset gun sounds, down come flags and pennants, and up go the twinkling riding-lights. Then, as the dark trees and church towers on land stand out against the golden sky fading into dusk, the motor launches and steam pinnaces and humble rowing-boats rush over the waters in all directions, bringing guests to the yachts for dinners or suppers—for entertaining is the order of the day, either on a large or a small scale—and I look back on many a jolly evening on our own boat, or those of friends, in which the party packed tightly together round the little table enjoyed their simple repast none the less because it was cooked by the host and hostess, and served “ hot and hot ” straight from the frying-pan or saucepan on to the guests’ plates. On the opposite coast there winds down from the heart of the New Forest the beautiful Beaulieu River, to which those who prefer to spend the night in a really quiet spot, away from the traffic

NEAR BUCKLER'S HARD, BEAULIEU RIVER

By MAUDE SPEED



Munde Speed

and noisy motor launches, are wont to resort when the shades of evening fall. Here, near though it is to the gay concourse, lone, tranquil spots can be found where dusk comes down in the complete silence and stillness of a Canadian creek a thousand miles from the nearest railway station. If we had not secured a very good berth in the crowded anchorage at Cowes we occasionally went over there ourselves, but generally preferred to remain in the thick of it all, though I must confess it made us a little melancholy of late years to miss so many of the boats that used to join us there, and to reflect on the number of old sailing pals who had passed to the other side; but that must always be the case with an annual rendezvous and its survivors.

To see royal personages in the gardens of the Royal Yacht Squadron is always a matter of interest during the week, and we had rather an amusing glimpse of King Edward at very close quarters once. There is one big night at the Royal Yacht Squadron's Castle when royalty dines with the members. Soon after King Edward came to the throne he was to dine there on the Tuesday night, and an old friend of ours asked us to come to the gardens in the evening

to hear the Blue Hungarian band and see the King smoking his cigar under the trees after the dinner. We were to come to the garden gate at 9 o'clock and he would let us in there. As the hour approached and we came up to the little closed gate, it suddenly opened and His Majesty came hastily out, almost tumbling into us, and, with a gentleman-in-waiting, jumped into the carriage we had noticed waiting there and drove off in a westerly direction. He had evidently another engagement on hand, and when we went in we broke the news to various people we knew, who were on the tiptoe of expectation, that the bird had flown !

We had a very pleasant dinner once on a large yacht. Our host and my husband had steered competing boats in the same race that day and had been mutually impressed with each other's seamanship, so after the race he came off to us with an invitation to dinner. He and his wife seemed very happy and jolly together, and we were amused at hearing afterwards from friends that they had lately been married *for the second time* ! Dissensions had arisen during their first venture which resulted in a Divorce Court action and a decree for the

wife. Later on they met again, made it up like sensible people, re-married, and I trust lived happily ever afterwards, but we lost sight of them, so I cannot say.

For a Cowes week many years ago all the Russian Royal Family arrived on a battleship, and we saw them several times. They passed close to our boat in a steam-launch on their way to visit Queen Victoria at Osborne, and we rowed up to their vessel and saw the poor girls, little dreaming of the terrible fate in store for them, playing at a ball game with the little Czarevitch, all of them dressed in white, which they seemed generally to wear, and the Czarina too. A sailor of enormous stature was always in attendance on the heir to that unquiet throne. We had seen the Czarina (then Princess Alix of Hesse) when in 1885 she was a bridesmaid at the wedding of Princess Beatrice and Prince Henry of Battenberg at Whippingham Church—two years after our own marriage. She was a graceful young girl then, and we thought her the prettiest of all the bridesmaids. We witnessed the arrival for that very interesting wedding through the kindness of the Rector of Whippingham, a friend of my father's whom we had called on the day before to find out if

there was any chance of our seeing anything of it. Our boat was in the Medina, down below the rising ground on which the church stands, and the Rector said if we came up into his garden we could get into the churchyard from there, but that was "all he could do" for us, and he could not have done better, for a very interesting sight we had, as we stood by the porch, of all those famous people assembled—Queen Victoria arriving with her daughter and conducting her into the church, where she herself gave the bride to the tall, handsome man who had won her heart. During the eighteen years we spent at Yarmouth Rectory, my husband met Canon Clement-Smith (Rector of Whippingham) often, as he was for some time Rural Dean of the West Wight, and he had a great regard for the man who had so long been mixed up with the joys and sorrows of the Royal Family, for he it was who prepared Princess Ena for confirmation into that Faith which she thought fit to renounce for the Queen Consort's crown of Spain, and he it was who received into Whippingham Church the body of her father, and he it was who was at the death-bed of the great Queen Victoria. At the conclusion of the last Cowes week we were ever

to attend, in that sad August of 1925, we went up to our old anchorage off Whippingham for the Sunday and walked up the hill to the church for the morning service. Canon Clement-Smith had died since we left Yarmouth in 1913, and my husband expressed a wish to see his grave, which we visited before returning to our yacht, *Pipefish*. How little my beloved one thought, as he stood reverently by the last resting-place of his old friend, that in less than a fortnight he also would be wrapt in that sleep which knows no awakening !

A special visit to Cowes I must mention, as it was a never-to-be-forgotten event, but there were no white racing boats skimming the waters then, no crowd of yachts in the roadstead ; it was early February instead of high summer-time, and if there were any flags flying they were at half-mast, for the great Queen, who had ruled over her vast dominions with extraordinary wisdom and judgment for sixty-five long years, was leaving Osborne, her island home, for her last voyage across the Solent. We were on board the steam-yacht *Greyhound*, belonging to our friend Mr. Nicholson, and he brought her alongside the jetty just astern of the *Alberta*, which was waiting at the royal landing-stage.

We joined a line of spectators standing in silence along the road leading to Osborne, in such silence that far away one could hear the plaintive notes of the band playing Beethoven's funeral march drawing nearer and nearer. Then came the procession with the ruler of the greatest kingdom on earth lying on a simple gun-carriage, all the Royal Family, with King Edward, the Kaiser, and other potentates, walking behind—just mourning the mother and the head of the family rather than the Queen. We returned to the *Greyhound* in time to see the coffin carried on board, and at that moment a gleam of winter sunshine shot through the clouds and caught the dead Monarch's favourite little diamond crown, which was the one she always wore, and left to Queen Alexandra, as it lay on the coffin with the sceptre, and flashed from it rays of a thousand lights. Once again the sun broke through the mist when the vessel and her escort of destroyers were under way, then it came in long rays from under a dark cloud and slanted straight down on to the little *Alberta* as she steamed up between the lines of battleships firing their last salute for the Sovereign. The effect was most remarkable. Everything else was in gloom but just that ray

of light under which the *Alberta* bore her revered burden. We followed behind her all the way to Spithead, and that wonderful light was on her until blotted out by the smoke from the saluting battleships as it mingled with the gloomy haze of a winter's afternoon.

CHAPTER XI

ABOUT TWO FAMOUS BEAUTIES

I WAS on the Lymington steamer once, long, long ago, coming across from Totland Bay with my father and one of my sisters, when a tall man came up to greet my father and introduce the bride he had lately brought over to England from the Channel Isles. This was Mr. Langtry and his wife, "The Jersey Lily," who was soon to take London by storm with that charm and fair loveliness which became in fact world-renowned. My sister and I were then only schoolgirls, but were much struck with her elegant figure, bright eyes, and complexion, and I remember we were greatly taken with her dress and the dark blue cloak lined with red silk which she wore. Mr. Langtry and his first wife (a very pretty little woman) had lived at Lymington for some time, and I think she died there. He kept his yacht in the river, and laid her up in the shipyard which was far-famed then

for the many successful racing yachts "Inman" built—notably the *Alarm* and *Lulworth*, celebrated cup-winners. On one great occasion, by the by, two large yachts were launched on the same morning, the christening ceremonies being performed by my sister (Sissie, now Mrs. Hall) and myself as they moved off—my steam-yacht, *The Iole*, first, and my sister's large cutter, *The Mayflower*, half an hour afterwards. So the yachting had brought Mr. Langtry to Lymington, and as we passed up the river he pointed out where his moorings had been laid down, and the bride told us how much she liked yachting and hoped they would find themselves lying there soon in their yacht, but I never heard that they returned, and he was wise if he sought other anchorage, for that was associated with another woman, and, when a new leaf is turned over, it is better not to mix the past with the present, but to break fresh ground. A few years after this, when Mrs. Langtry was at the zenith of her triumph, she and my husband were performers together in Lady Freke's "Beauty Tableaux," the great sensation of that London season. All those taking part had been carefully selected as the handsomest men and most beautiful women in

Society. Famous R.A.'s arranged the scenes and posed the players, and amongst the on-lookers were the Prince and Princess of Wales (afterwards King Edward and Queen Alexandra) and other members of the Royal Family. My husband had lately been called to the Bar and was living at his father's house in Devonshire Place. The Chevalier Desange, one of the well-known artists arranging the tableaux, had met him and been much impressed with his extraordinary good looks (as everyone was who saw him), so he insisted on his joining the show. He scorned the idea at first, but yielded finally "just for the fun of the thing," and very splendid (I have been told) he looked as a Crusader, especially in one scene which showed Mrs. Langtry kneeling before Saladin, King of the Saracens. Large photographs of the tableaux were on view at a studio in Regent Street for years afterwards, and I went to see them there, but, alas, never saw the Crusader in the flesh attired in his mail armour and helmet, for I did not know him then. The Prince and Princess at the close of the show passed down between the performers, who lined the stairs on either side, congratulating them. Mrs. Langtry had placed herself in the corner at the turn of

the stairs, out of which His Royal Highness drew her, and acclaimed her as the great success of the evening. My husband spoke of that scene as the most remarkable one of all !

Mrs. Langtry's chief rival as a popular beauty was Mrs. Cornwallis-West. Their photos were in every photographer's window and in the albums of most young men—junior officers and 'Varsity freshmen, who were then (and their successors are now) at an age when they like to be thought "a devil of a fellow with the women." The names of those two ladies were so well-known all over the world that even the riding donkeys at Cairo were called after them by their Arab owners, and when I was there I had a nice ride out towards the Pyramids on Mrs. Langtry—a beautiful, large white Egyptian donkey that cantered almost with the ease of a pony ! Of course the favour bestowed upon them by a great personage was at the bottom of their renown ; he delighted in the society of them both, and titled hostesses and other leaders of rank and fashion followed suit, and felt their parties would be lacking in success if neither was there. Colonel Cornwallis-West's mother was a very old friend of my parents (I went to my first dinner party in her

house), and they had known her son all his life, so, when he brought his vivacious wild Irish bride to stay at his mother's, she naturally came to my home, and fell quite in love with my father, hailing him as a compatriot and playing all sorts of pranks on him, and she kept this affection for him up to the last. Years after he had gone from us she saw his photo in my drawing-room and said, "Oh! There's that darling! He was the sweetest old dear in the whole countryside." Her impetuous high spirits soon got her into hot water with her mother-in-law (one of the old school), and at a ball given to introduce the bride to the neighbourhood poor Mrs. West had rather a shock, for, while she was upstairs putting on some fancy disguise in which, I think, she was going to tell people's fortunes or appear as a witch at the supper table (she was very fond of doing that sort of thing!), her young daughter-in-law, feeling hungry and impatient at the delay, danced everybody off into the supper-room and spoilt the surprise the old lady had prepared for her guests! Great wrath ensued, and the son's brilliant wife was not seen again at "Newlands" for years. I was at school when all this happened, and I saw little of the

Cornwallis-Wests till after the death of his mother, when they spent a good deal of their time at "Newlands," and we had left Yarmouth and built a house for ourselves on a piece of land we bought from him on the Hampshire coast. Colonel Cornwallis-West was a polished gentleman, a most loyal and devoted husband, and a great lover of the fine arts. His chief hobby was painting, and he often brought his sketches down to show me, or they got me to go and lunch with them and paint with him afterwards, and they came to tea with us sometimes. One Sunday morning she brought an artist friend, who was staying with them, down to our little house at Keyhaven to see my paintings. We were at church, but that did not trouble her. She told the servant she would wait for our return, went into the drawing-room, hunted out my folios, and when I came back the sketches were all over the place. She met us at the hall door, and said, "Oh! How-de-do! Do come in. I'm so glad I'm at home." Then she put her arm through mine and said, "You don't mind, do you?" as she showed me the litter she had made! I got many stories out of her of the adventurous days she had passed through when the world was at her feet. One

I must repeat as it is an amusing anecdote of the late Mr. Gladstone. They were both fellow-guests at a big house for a ball that was to take place there, and she and the great statesman, and another famous man whose name I fear I have forgotten, went for a country walk in the afternoon. "Now will you promise me one thing—to wear at the ball to-night what I will pick for you?" said Mr. Gladstone, indicating the field flowers. She promised she would, and he brought her shortly afterwards a large yellow swede that he pulled up in a field! "I rely on you to keep your promise," he said, and she assured him she would do so. When she arrived back at the house she got a footman who was very clever with his hands to scoop out the inside of the swede, and wire up its green top to look like an egret, and round the base of the swede she arranged her tiara, so it sat on her hair like a crown! Great was the admiration for her resource expressed by the donor when she met him.

One day I admired a particularly beautiful Scotch brooch she wore as a buckle. She said it had once belonged to Prince Charlie, and King Edward gave it to her to commemorate an adventure. She was fishing with him on a

river in Scotland, and they wanted to get across to the other side. There was no bridge, but the river was wide and shallow there, so he carried her over on his back. Just as they landed on the opposite bank they perceived a wretched man concealed in some bushes, who had, with a large camera, photographed the whole proceeding. His Majesty (who, I think, was then Prince of Wales) had him pursued and the negatives confiscated, as he was trespassing on private property. The King was wearing the brooch at the time (with his Highland dress) and he gave it to her as a souvenir of her very unique ride.

I heard a little anecdote of her once from a man who was one of a body-guard of admirers hovering about as she sat on the box-seat of a coach at some races. She overheard a man in the crowd who was looking up at her say to another, "Her face is painted," so she turned to one of her aides-de-camp sitting on the seat behind her and said, "Did you hear that remark?" He said he did. She then took a handkerchief from her pocket, rubbed it hard on her cheek before everyone, and asked him to give it to the critic with her compliments, and doubtless it was kept as a highly valued prize!

This story reminds me of a rather similar one about my husband's mother, who in her youth was considered the most beautiful girl in Brighton. She was walking on the parade one day a little in advance of the aunt who was with her, and who heard a man, looking at her with great admiration, say to a friend walking with him as they got close to her : " Painted, by God ! " The old lady said to him : " Yes, sir, she's painted *by God*, and by no one else ! " and they raised their hats, and walked away abashed.

Mrs. West once broke a tooth, she told me, biting on something hard (a fruit stone, I think) while dining on board the royal yacht at Cowes. She was sitting next to the Marquis de Soveral, who advised her to get it into a handkerchief. While she was doing so Queen Mary noticed something was wrong and asked what was the matter. " I've got a tooth in my mouth, ma'am," she said. " Only one, Mrs. West ? " said the Queen. " A few more, ma'am," she answered, " but this one is out," and with that she managed to convey it to her pocket !

Long before we came to live in the West's neighbourhood both their daughters had flown

from the nest, one to become a princess, the other a duchess. The anxiety during all the long years of the War that they suffered over the miseries endured by the Princess of Pless, constrained to stay all the time in Germany, told on them and helped to break up Colonel West's health altogether, for he was devoted to his eldest daughter, and always kept a lovely painting of her in his own sanctum. He showed it to me with great pride and said he feared she would never look youthful and lovely again as she was in that picture after those awful years in our enemy's country—out of which she was not even allowed for a few days when her father was slowly dying. Latterly troubles and worries of various kinds were too much for them both. I got many little pencilled notes from her. One said: "I want you to know how I simply love your book ('A Yachts-woman's Cruises'). I keep it always by my bedside like a Bible and read scraps of it every night." Another sent down by a groom said: "Do come to lunch and see if you can cheer the Colonel: you always do us good. We are both very depressed." I went up, but saw at once that no one could do him any good. He had death written on his face, and I begged him not to start for Ruthin Castle as he meant to do

in a few days' time, but he said he was bent on going and felt sure he should get better there. So they drove all the way down to North Wales; he died shortly after he got there, and she did not long survive him. Her beauty was of a kind that lasted well. It could not actually be said of her as of Cleopatra, "Age cannot wither her nor custom stale her infinite variety," but no ravage that time works could destroy the finely cut features and outline of the face; she kept her shapely figure, and the vivacious dark eyes never lost their mischievous sparkle to the end of the chapter. I suppose since the days of Louise de la Vallière and Madame de Montespan in Louis XIV's reign, and those of Rose du Barri who ruled France through Louis XV, no women have had such a reputation for beauty as the two I have written about in this chapter, who from the middle seventies and during the eighties and nineties were rival queens in the realms of Society.

CHAPTER XII

ABOUT WELL-KNOWN MEN

IT was always a matter of great interest to me to hear my father-in-law talk of his early experiences at the Bar, and on the rare occasions when I could get him in a communicative mood he told me things that I heartily wish I had noted down at the time so that I could relate them correctly now. When railway law was in its infancy Mr. Speed, Q.C., made it his special study, and became such an authority on the subject that he was known by the name of "Railway Speed" to all his contemporaries. He was "Standing Counsel" for many years to the L. & N.W. Railway, with a large retaining fee, and his opinion was sought by the directors of all the chief lines in our land whenever a difficult question had to be settled. The public had no idea in those days of the autocratic power an Act of Parliament permitting a line to be made from one place to another confers

on the directors of the railway company in question. For instance, when the main line from Euston to Holyhead was under construction it came to a dead stop at a spot in North Wales where several houses stood in the way, and the owners refused to take compensation for them and leave. My father-in-law went down to inspect the place and had notice given to the householders that if their dwellings were not vacated by a certain date a large gang of workmen would arrive to eject them and pull the houses down. Of course they fled in consternation to solicitors and barristers, who found, on consulting the Act, that they had not a leg to stand on, and the great line pursued its unrelenting way straight from Chester to the Irish Sea. Frequently to settle some knotty question and save valuable time (his own and the railway company's), Mr. Speed was sent a long-distance run by special train, consisting of a first-class carriage and the engine and tender. My husband went with him on one or two occasions as Junior Counsel, and to his great joy and interest was allowed to ride on the engine !

An amusing little incident happened in court once which his sons rejoiced in recounting

against their father. He was commencing a speech for the defence in an important case when the Judge remarked, "I cannot hear you, Mr. Speed," so he began again in a louder voice when the Judge repeated, "I cannot hear you,



"I CANNOT HEAR YOU, MR. SPEED"

Mr. Speed." The poor man cleared his throat and raised his voice louder still. Then the court began to titter, and someone called his attention to the fact that he had no bands on! The absence of this small detail of correct garb was a fatal impediment to being allowed to plead, and for once the faithful Brockelsby, for fifty years his clerk and right-hand man,

had omitted to put out the bands with his wig and other insignia of office. The error, of course, was quickly rectified and the proceedings continued.

For a great treat, when that somewhat austere man was in an amiable mood, he took me once with him on a Sunday morning to attend the service at the Temple Church and lunch afterwards in the grand old Middle Temple Hall with the Benchers. It was rather awe-inspiring to find myself in the midst of so many clever and learned men, and I sang very small and sat with pricked-up ears listening to the words of wisdom that fell from their lips. "This is my little daughter-in-law from the country," Mr. Speed said, and I cast my eyes down demurely, and acted up to the part assigned me. "Well, if she's your Harry's wife she has a handsome husband," one famous man remarked, and my heart warmed towards him, for we were agreed on one subject at any rate! Each of the Benchers has his coat-of-arms painted on one of the dark old oak panels of that ancient hall, and I noted with satisfaction that the Speeds' Swallow stood out well on the one allotted to my father-in-law.

In December 1889 we made the acquaintance

of Mr. Frederick Leyland, the shipping magnate and owner of the Leyland line of steamers, when we were in London for the marriage of his younger daughter, Elinor, to my brother-in-law, Elmer Speed. Mr. Leyland was a lover of art in all its branches, and his great wealth made him a powerful patron of both painters and musicians. It is not too much to say that he almost discovered and brought to public notice Burne-Jones, as he was a warm admirer of that artist's peculiar style of painting and the possessor of many of his finest works. His large London residence—Princes Gate House—was a veritable museum of beautiful things of all descriptions, but the one of all others that has been world-famous was the so-called Peacock Room, because the walls of it (the dining-room) were painted all round with peacocks in various attitudes by Whistler, and it was, I imagine, the largest work he ever executed. It certainly made a lovely and unique setting for the wedding feast which was held in it! Many of Whistler's pictures adorned other rooms, and the china of various kinds formed one of the finest private collections in London. On the death of Mr. Leyland the house was sold and the treasures dispersed. A wealthy American

bought the splendid balustrades which had come from Northumberland House when it was pulled down, and also the famous decorations of the Peacock Room. The panels of decorated leather of beautiful workmanship over which the paintings were done were carefully removed, and together with the balustrades they crossed the ocean for the adornment of a millionaire's mansion in New York !

Mr. Leyland was one of those influential people who helped to bring in towards the late Victorian period a higher and more refined style in the furnishing and decorating of our English homes. I suppose that about 1840 architecture and artistic judgment were at the lowest ebb they have ever reached in our land ! Certainly the churches of that period were monuments of hideousness, and most lamentable of all was the mania that raged for restoring and "improving" during twenty years from that date. Beautiful oak panelling was given a coat of white paint, and ancient things of beauty were cast on the dust-heap, to be replaced by objects of crude and awkward design. Then gradually came the revival. Art schools helped to educate the eye in painting, needlework, carving, and stained glass. With the demand came an

interest in improving our museums, so that now not only can the best examples be seen of beautiful furniture, cut-glass, old china, and so on at the Victoria and Albert and other London museums, but such towns as Bath and Brighton, besides the larger commercial cities of England, own fine, well-kept free museums where the public taste can be educated through the eye. In the public Art Gallery at Brighton, by the by, hang two huge paintings by my husband's great-uncle, William Leatham, a noted marine artist of his day—"The Battle of the Nile" and "The Battle of Trafalgar."

English homes for comfort and beauty combined have no rivals; they hold their own against the world in spite of a strong effort made of late years by a foolish minority to introduce startling colours and crude pictures for the sake of novelty and to break up the homely cosiness that is the keynote of our success by doing away with doors, window curtains, and even open fires, which are replaced by warm and clean, but thoroughly comfortless radiators. This epidemic will be short-lived, I am sure. It is enough to bring back in indignant protest the shades of Ruskin, Talbot, Morris, and Oscar Wilde, who did much

towards creating a better taste in furniture. Such things as shops for antiques, I think, hardly existed at the close of the last century ! Forty years ago I routed out of second-hand shops in small country towns most beautiful things for the furnishing of our first home, and bought them for a mere song as they were dubbed old-fashioned and out-of-date. I got two lovely hand-cut brass fenders for £1 each, and amongst other things four old oak dining-room chairs for £4, selling them twenty-five years afterwards (when they had become unsafe for use !) for £20. In fact my house is full of "antiques" that we got for next to nothing, as my husband and I were both in advance of our day in our love of old furniture ; but I must add that the work of local carpenters at that time, and earlier, if done according to instructions, was *excellent*. They used thoroughly seasoned wood, and put in careful and skilled work. I have some splendid stools and chairs in mahogany and walnut wood made by a Lymington man which will last for generations ; some of them were made to take the wool-work, which was the fashion of that day (very elaborate and good, but generally of unfortunate design and colouring), done by my mother when I was a child.

In 1913 we were again in London for a family wedding at St. Margaret's, Westminster, and this one I record, not because it was a singular occurrence for us to be at a relative's wedding (for we had been to very many !), but because the bridegroom has since come to fame. The bride was the daughter of Mrs. de Sélincourt, my husband's second sister, and her uncle assisted in tying that mystic knot which united her to Mr. A. A. Milne, then making a name for himself with his amusing weekly articles in *Punch*, and now borne on the tide of an immense success in humorous literary work, being especially lucky in the extraordinary way in which he has hit the popular fancy with those simple rhymes entitled "When we were very Young" and others following after them in the same strain, making him a successor to Lewis Carroll in the hearts of children. The verses are even set very prettily to music, and Young people sing them all over the world. His small son, with the unusual combination of names "Christopher Robin," whose doings suggested the poems, has become a personality in the imagination of almost every child in the land through the pen of his father, who, when he is not inditing funny rhymes or amusing

books, is writing smart plays for London theatres ("Mr. Pim Passes By," "The Dover Road," etc.). No one would guess that such an inexhaustible flow of humour would come from the brain of this quiet and most unobtrusive little man. Alan Milne is, in fact, a wolf in sheep's clothing! He prowls about the world pulling the legs of unsuspecting dowagers and drawing out voluble talk from silly girls who never dream that he is secretly dissecting and carefully digesting all their words and actions into matter for useful "copy"! A picture of Christopher Robin (in his favourite tree) is now being painted by Katherine G. Parsons for reproduction, and doubtless other children will be interested in seeing what their unknown friend is like!

Not all the books that come into the hands of young people nowadays are as pleasant and harmless as Mr. Milne's. It amazes me to see girls in their teens allowed the run of the public libraries, selecting and reading anything they like, and often devouring with avidity works which my husband (with that innate love for all things clean and wholesome, which was one of his strongest characteristics) pronounced to be "only fit to place on the couch-fire!"

Naturally, if girls and boys are allowed to select and read the hectic books of certain lady writers they will lose their appetite for Scott and Dickens, or even for the delightful stories of Oliver Curwood and Rider Haggard, for though sex problem novels are not all understood they will seize upon them if permitted in preference to anecdotes of birds and wild animals and exploring adventures on land and sea. In my old home the censorship of books was *strict*. Even the poets were under surveillance ! Milton, Cowper, Scott, and Moore were allowed *ad lib.*, but Byron only in selections. The copy containing Don Juan was hidden, and when I raided that poem from my aunt's bookshelves and read it secretly by night I wondered (not understanding half of it) why it was forbidden fruit ! Tennyson was allowed, *barring* the immortal "Idylls," because they dealt with illicit love, and that subject was very rightly considered not food for babes. Indeed, to the young the tragedies of Lancelot and Guinevere, Antony and Cleopatra, Francesca da Rimini and Paolo, and others have no inner meaning, and cannot be rightly weighed up and judged. Only those who know personally or have seen in others the terrible and devastating force of

an overmastering passion can enter into its joys, and trials, and temptations, can temper their condemnation of its guilt with compassion, and when the inevitable end comes can realise that sorrow is the price always to be paid. "Pour chaque once de plaisir cinq quintaux de mal," Voltaire says, and unhallowed love *always* ends in grief; it is

" A chase of idle hopes and fears
Begun in folly, closed in tears,"

whether the end comes secretly, and "the heart knoweth its own bitterness" alone, or whether it comes in the light of day, blasting hearth and home and wrecking lives. It is one of the dangers of this life of ours to be watched for and reckoned with. But the whole subject is better kept as a closed and clasped book to the young, whose thoughts should be of the bright and light-hearted and innocent things of this world of ours rather than of the powers of darkness and the wiles of "the flesh and the devil."

CHAPTER XIII

ON VARIOUS MATTERS

WHAT a delightful great city London was before the coming of motors!—which marks, I think, the boundary-line between the old world and the new, for all the rapid changes and unrest and general hustle and rush dates from their arrival. To-day London is altered, though the change is subtle. It is terribly overgrown, the country has receded much farther from it. It has a different roar and a different smell, and one misses the interest of watching the horses so much, especially in the parks, where the meets of the Coaching Club and Four-in-Hand Club were a beautiful sight for Londoners. I believe the Coaching Club still goes on, but the driving of four horses on the crowded roads now must be an anxious job for the man on the box! I went once on a friend's coach to the meet near the powder magazine, and down in procession to the Orleans Club on the river

for lunch and tea, the Duke of Beaufort presiding at the luncheon—a red-letter day to remember !

It must have been about 1873 that bicycles first appeared, for my husband's bicycle-book, which he kept without a break to the end of his life (in 1925), says that he started cycling then on a wooden velocipede while still at a public school. He was always consistently devoted to the sport, and at Oxford was one of the founders of the Dark Blue Bicycle Club, and for a time its Captain. (His life-long friend " Billy " Crofton, now Rector of Codicote, is one of the few surviving original members of that club.) I find from his book that during his long cycling career he covered 78,552 miles !—more than three times round the world. This includes the many delightful tours and rides we took together, long ago, on an old-fashioned tandem tricycle, and of late years on a modern Rudge tandem bicycle which I think we enjoyed as much as our motoring. Cycling for ladies did not come in till the 'eighties. When we were living at Chichester in 1885, I was the pioneer of it there, and people stood still to watch me riding through the city on a tricycle accompanied by my husband on his



"HI! PENNY-FARTINGS!"

high 58-inch Timberlake bicycle—a penny-farthing, as they were called, from the big wheel and the tiny one behind it. The mounting of these machines was quite an acrobatic feat, and I think my husband's grandfather (Mr. Charles Bond) was the gamest old gentleman I ever heard of, for he learned to ride one of these formidable things when approaching seventy, and covered forty-six miles in one run ! Ladies' bicycles did not come in till years later when the " safety " machines began to appear.

Then in 1898 cars were first to be seen on the roads, but they were few and far between for a long time. I remember that when we bought our first car—a Sizaire 2-seater, in 1904—we were quite worth looking at as we drove along through villages and towns, and when another car hove in sight we used to say, " Hullo ! Here comes another car," and we and the other occupants stared at each other with interest ! And how enjoyable the driving along the roads was then ! Now the ceaseless stream of vehicles of all sizes and descriptions wherever you go makes motoring a doubtful pleasure—and a dangerous one owing to the behaviour of countless numbers of beginners and road-hogs. The utmost speed we could get out of our Sizaire

was 18 m.p.h., and it was very proud of itself when doing that. It had no windscreen at all, and we drove along like masked people—quite unrecognisable in goggles and (in winter) muffled up to the eyes, but we got no end of fun out of it, and covered 1,500 miles during a three weeks' tour in it. Having only one cylinder, it was *not* a good hill climber and landed us in difficulties sometimes. I have had to jump out occasionally and push with all my might, thereby just saving the situation ! Also its internal arrangements (generally its electric organ) sometimes hung fire and lost us appointments. It played us that trick once in the Isle of Wight when on our way to a garden party at the Tennyson's. For an hour and a half my husband was trying to find out what the trouble was, and when at last he got it going the party was over. The fiasco recalled a still worse one that occurred in our sailing-yacht *Lerna*. We were going up from Yarmouth to Southampton Water to sleep at a friend's house and be present at a dinner party that night, but the wind died away to a dead calm, the tide turned against us, and we arrived after breakfast the next morning !

On the heels of motor cars came the still more amazing invention of aeroplanes. In 1910

we were at the first show of flying boats and planes in the south of England, when (on the day after we were there) poor Rolls, son of Lord Llangattock, one of the pioneer pilots, crashed and was killed. From that time the plane industry has rapidly developed, and the roar of these formidable denizens of the air is heard everywhere. I travelled from London to Paris in a great "air liner" in perfect comfort, except for the terrible noise, which is deafening. I could not hear my own voice when I tried to ask a question! Many people complain of nausea, but not being subject to sea-sickness, I was not bothered with it in the air, but I felt that a longer flight than I took would be boring, as, being nearly a mile high, one can see nothing to interest one in the views. Human beings, animals, and carts are quite invisible to the naked eye, even trains can only be noted by their smoke! The thrilling part of a flight, and the only time when the terrific pace is realised, is at the start and finish; once high up in the air the plane seems to be standing still! It seems incredible that when I was a child neither bicycles, motor cars, nor aeroplanes had been invented, so rapidly has the world moved along in that short space of time,

and trains even had not appeared when my father was a boy! Consider also the amazing change that has taken place in the ocean-going liners of this generation! One of the earliest things I can remember was being shown from my nursery window a distant sight of the famous *Great Eastern* going up the Solent after crossing the Atlantic. She was a paddle-steamer with four masts and sails, and would be a funny sight in these days by the side of the *Mauretania*! My father-in-law walked under her hull while she was building, and often described her. The latest and newest form of travel I have tried this autumn, when I ascended to a height of 7,560 ft. by aerial railway in the Austrian Alps—an apparently most hazardous mode of progression, but I believe quite safe.

Yet we are still separated from old primitive days by so short a space of time that even now one comes across country people who know little or nothing of the whirl of modern traffic. While sketching during this last summer (1928) near Land's End I got into conversation with a fine grey-bearded old fisherman who told me he had only once been in a train, and that was merely for the short run from Penzance to Truro and back again. "I never want

to go in another," he added. And this recalls another incident. A few years ago I arrived at Waterloo only just in time to catch my train, and, springing into a carriage as the train was starting, I found myself alone in it with a man. He looked earnestly and with unusual interest at me as we moved off, and soon, bending towards me, remarked : " Oh, I am so glad you have come ! " This was somewhat surprising, so I fixed him with a stern eye, and said : " Indeed, sir ! Perhaps you would like a newspaper to read," and handed him one, casting an upward glance at the same time towards the communication cord to make sure it was in position. But no ! He didn't want a newspaper, he only wanted a companion ! At this I began to think he was not dangerous, but merely mad—till he went on to explain that he was eighty-six years of age (he looked at least twenty years younger and well preserved at that), and having only been in a train once before in his life, when he came up to town, felt very nervous about the whole proceeding, and especially when he found himself alone ! So, of course, I made friends with the poor old fellow and cheered him up.

There are two great pleasures that we enjoy in these post-war days, the possibility of which

was never even dreamt of twenty years ago—I allude to the cinemas which are in every small town in the land, and give delight to millions, and the “wireless” which brings the concert hall and lecture room on to the domestic hearth-rug, and is a special boon to the ailing and lonely. This marvellous development of Marconi's discovery is almost too weird to contemplate, and verges on the uncanny. Of course it has certain drawbacks: one is that just as the cinemas are drawing audiences away from the theatres, so the wireless is adversely affecting the concert halls, and it is also having the effect of discouraging practical music in the home, which is not good for the individual, because “listening in” begins and ends with pleasing the ear, without the faculties and brain being brought to bear upon the production of the melody—a higher and nobler communion with that divine art than merely listening to it, often, and in point of fact generally, with divided attention. I allude to those who, with a considerable gift and ear for music, have devoted a large amount of time and study to it. I hope and think that the time has now arrived when students who have neither ear nor aptitude, nor love for it, will soon discover that fact, leave it entirely alone, and devote the

valuable time formerly wasted in trying to learn it to something more profitable to themselves and others.

But if we have gained a score in those two new pleasures, we have lost many marks to the old days in the concerts, for although the performers (singly and in orchestra) are as good as ever, the music, and especially the songs, of to-day are, in my humble opinion, *very* inferior to those of thirty years and more ago, and I venture to suggest that if the lovely and appealing ballad songs of yore were sung now concerts would be better attended, in spite of the wireless, than they are. The short, scrappy little ditties that we get don't catch hold of one's heart and mind, don't raise any feelings of patriotism or joy, don't touch any hidden springs of memory or fond regret, or recall dreams of the what-might-have-beens—don't, in fact, touch *senti-ment*, and that is a word that takes some courage to write now, for a fashion has set in amongst ultra-modernists for it to be wiped out! Yet it is one of the loveliest flowers of earth, it transforms the wilderness into a garden, and those who crush it under foot with disdain walk on till life is done in a dry and arid desert of sunless gloom. To eradicate it from music and singing is to take the soul out of the art. In

the inspiring compositions of the great masters it breathes through every bar, appealing to the deepest emotions of the heart and brain, touching indeed sometimes thoughts which lie too deep for tears, or raising human emotions upwards to the worship of the Divine. There is no purer music in the world than the song of birds, and that is breathing sentiment all the time, in every note that floats into the air, for they are swayed by no passing fashions and fads. They sing to our own monarch just as they sang to William the Conqueror, and before that to the Caesars—

“ The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown.
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn.”

But confound not true sentiment, oh! ye scorners, with the *sentimental* class of goods indulged in by silly old maids and hysterical schoolgirls, for that is a counterfeit production that does not ring true. With the modern effort to chase out of our lives this beautiful thing has come the banishment of those grand songs of Gounod, Blumenthal, Sullivan, Cohen, Tosti, and many more. I believe at heart the main body of the public prefer such music and yearn for it, and I can well imagine what an

uproar of applause there would be in a concert hall of to-day if the audience could hear Patti singing "Let me dream again," Edward Lloyd giving us "Sweethearts," Antoinette Stirling's glorious voice ringing out in "The Lost Chord," "Darby and Joan," or "Caller Herrin' " ! and the unforgettable singing of Sims Reeves, which I was just in time to hear at one of his farewell concerts. It is the modernists' endeavour to be hard and unaffected by lovely things that has permitted the noises and discords of Stravensky and others of that school to torture our ears from the concert platform, in the same way as our eyes are offended in the picture galleries by the works of cubists and post-impressionists. I think this germ of the love of ugliness is not English. Did it come to us across the ocean, I wonder, along with Ford cars, milk separators, and many other things we could have done very well without if left to ourselves—or is it Bolshevik in origin? The Epstein distorted and hideous figure in London's splendid public park will be one of the lasting mementoes (I fear) of this temporary insanity which has run riot of late years, but will pass away with the generation that displays the knees and shaves the polls of its womenfolk !

CHAPTER XIV

SOME OLD SMUGGLERS' YARNS

“ And there they stand, that smuggling band,
Some in the water and some on the sand,
Ready those contraband goods to land.”

(Ingoldsby Legends.)

DURING the many years I spent in the Isle of Wight I had warm friends amongst the fishermen and old salts of my locality there, and had no difficulty in getting them to talk to me of the smuggling adventures of their youth, as they knew and trusted me—strangers from the mainland (“oveners,” as they are called) might draw them in vain! I think some of the yarns, which I wrote down at the time they were told me, may be worth putting on record in this little book, as adventures of the sea must always appeal to the dwellers in our sea-girt land, and there will be no more of such as these. It is sixty years and upwards since the Island was one of the very strongholds of the smuggling industry, now completely stamped out. It





THE SMUGGLER YARNS

stands to reason, therefore, that the race of men who were engaged in this dangerous illicit trade are chiefly beneath the green sods of their rural churchyards, and that those still alive are getting on in years, and were but youths when they helped to run cargoes with their elders. Very wrong this trade was, we know, and lawless to a degree, but—we cannot help reflecting the twinkle in their eyes when they speak of it, and judging these jolly old sea-dogs with a lenient mind, and a hankering at the bottom of our hearts after the adventure and excitement and dangerous fun of it all! The real sporting risks taken and the fair game of “catch-me-if-you-can” must appeal to all Britishers. The prize was worth earning, but the punishment was severe, while the chances seemed all on the pursuer’s side, so that none but those whose physique, courage, and nerves were of steel could join in battle against such long odds.

One old fisherman especially, Bill Drakes by name, spun me many yarns of the old days, sitting on an upturned boat, with a reminiscent look in his keen grey eyes, as he smoked the tobacco I had bought for him out of an old black pipe. He was well qualified to speak on the subject, too, for of all the heroes of the trade

none was harder or more renowned than his father, an ex-pilot whose licence had been forfeited over a little affair connected with the mysterious landing of tubs. He was therefore a marked man, yet in spite of that fact contrived to play the game with such success that when at last he was caught and the game was up, the £500 that it cost him came out of that humble little store-cupboard without a murmur, and six weeks afterwards nearly £100 was paid for a new fishing smack to replace the boat confiscated ! Truly the stocking hanging up in his secret hiding-place must have been a long one and frequently replenished. And wasn't the money hard-earned, too ? Often did he start off by moonlight and tramp across fields and downs from Yarmouth to Blackgang or Niton (fourteen miles as the crow flies) to help land a cargo, walking back to his home at dawn ; and often has he put off with three other men in a 20-ft. wherry and rowed the whole way across Channel from the Needles to Barfleur, rowing back again with the cargo as soon as it was shipped. Only those who have made this passage in a small yacht (as the writer has frequently done) can realise what that feat means, the interminable distance that it seems,

the length of time that elapses before land is sighted, to say nothing of the physical endurance that is needed to row a heavy boat for nearly seventy miles, and the risk of bad weather coming on.

One proof among many which testifies to the wonderful grit of the man may be gathered from what took place when he was helping to land tubs at daybreak in Watcombe Bay, a little cove close to Freshwater. The boat from a smuggling smack had put in there and the tubs were being hauled up the steep face of the cliff on a rope when the party were surprised by armed coastguards. A hasty departure was the order of the day, but Drakes as he ran got shot in the thigh. It took something more than a mere bullet, though, to stop this hardy old Philistine, and, showing a clean pair of heels to his pursuers, he made for Mill Copse, nearly four miles off, where he bound up his wound and lay quietly till nightfall. Then returning to his home, and avoiding the peril of calling in the aid of a doctor, he hooked the bullet out with a penknife. It was of such metal that the Vikings of old were made—those marauders who, sailing from their northern homes, pillaged and conquered the Wight, leaving their bones

under the tumuli on her downs, and their descendants—so tradition asserts—in her villages and hamlets.

But it was about the final mischance which befell Drakes that I was asking his son when he seemed in a yarning mood, and what he told me then I will translate into English, for no dictionary has yet been compiled of the Wight vernacular. On a certain day when Bill was about fifteen the man of iron said to his son : “ You are now old enough and strong enough to help in the real trading work, and you will come with me to-day to fetch a load of gravel from Redbridge ” (near Southampton). Nothing more was said, for questions were not encouraged in the Drakes *ménage*. The elder had a little habit of repressing idle curiosity by a sound cuff with his fist, which had effectually eradicated that vice from the members of his family. So to Redbridge they went, and in came the gravel—just fifteen tons, and the boat took thirty. Then Bill was told to cast off and run up the jib. A stranger at that moment stepped on board. “ We’re taking a passenger down,” the skipper said. It was blowing hard, and darkness had come on when the lights of Yarmouth hove in sight ; but no orders came

for running down the main-sail, and there was no starboarding of the helm as the little harbour opened on the port side. With surprise Bill saw the Needles light drawing nearer and nearer, and then out into the dark night and over the great rollers on the bridge reef the smack charged with her bows pointing to France. By this time the vessel was sailing rail under, and a big wave caught the lad, washed him off his feet, and tumbled him aft. The skipper received him on the point of his boot, and sent him flying into the well. "That'll teach you to keep your feet another time, my son," he said. "And it did, mum," Bill added.

When at length the morning broke, the great Crucifix that stands at the entrance to Barfleur Harbour lifted its hands in unheeded benediction as the adventurous boat's crew passed beneath it and made fast to the quay, where they immediately started shipping tubs of the powerful spirit, the very fumes of which soon completely overpowered the young fellow and rendered him a poor helper in the work, despite the practical methods his father employed to rouse him. Each of the tubs employed in this trade was worth about £3, and contained enough

raw spirit to make $2\frac{1}{2}$ tubs when made ready for consumption. The "gentleman passenger" was the dealer, and old Drakes stood to clear £200 for his share in the transaction—a tempting bait for a man of his class. However, it was never destined to find its way into the stocking, for disaster was at hand and overtook them the next night, when Bill, according to instructions, rowed into Colwell Bay with the passenger in the dingey and a long string of tubs towing behind, his father meanwhile, with no lights showing, lying hove to out in the Solent.

The local coastguards having made their rounds there and gone off, the signal was given that a landing was safe ; but, alas ! two sharp officers from Cowes, having a suspicion that something was up, were concealed in ambush, and when the dingey's keel grated on the beach sprang upon Bill and his companion, and captured them. They both wriggled free, but had to leave the boat and take to their heels with one man in pursuit. It was not till the dealer had been bowled over by a shot, and the lad had heard one whistle close past his ear, that he threw up the sponge and surrendered.

Trial and conviction followed upon this disaster, and from that time the game was over

for the Drakes, as they were too closely watched to make a pursuance of it possible. Still, they gave a quiet helping hand to it whenever they could. On one occasion Bill, while fishing, was hailed by a strange cutter which brought up off Yarmouth, badly wanting food after long delay in the Channel in a dead calm. Having soon discovered that they had fallen in with one of their own confraternity, they confided to him that their boat was full to the decks of tobacco to be delivered at Lymington, and he gladly agreed to give them help in the landing of it, which was safely accomplished, all being deposited at the Fishermen's Rest Inn, a great haunt of smugglers in those days, and still to be seen at Woodside, near Lymington.

The practical jokes played on authorities were frequent. One day an exciseman, on his weary march from Freshwater to Brooke, gladly accepted a cordial offer of a lift in a cart laden with hay, little suspecting that under a thin layer of the hay tubs were packed closely, his heels even touching one of them as he sat ! On another occasion a good old maiden lady of regular and well-known habits would have been somewhat surprised had she happened, contrary to custom, to take a walk in her garden on a

Sunday and to visit the two summer-houses that stand at either end of the garden terrace washed by the sea. She would have found them both full to the ceiling with tubs that had been landed on the Saturday night and left there all day Sunday. Then after the moon had set they were carried down to the marsh, where a cart was in readiness to convey them to a farm at Freshwater, which was a *depôt* for such goods.

Few of the farmers round the Island could resist giving a tacit helping hand to the traders. Little tubs that were made specially for gifts were frequently found mysteriously placed by some fairy during the night on the window-sills or doorsteps of farms where convenient barns were left unlocked at nights, and somehow or other the farmer's pipe was always full of good tobacco without any paying for it. Nothing much was said, but he was always "kind o' finding things" ! Sometimes, when the landing of a cargo was difficult, tubs were thrown over-board on an anchor close in shore ; then, as occasion offered, men drew them up with a creep and rowed them ashore one or two at a time. But it fell out once that the coastguards fished them up instead and locked thirty full

tubs safely in a room in Yarmouth Castle. The daring smugglers, though, were not to be baulked of their prize, but broke into the Castle at night, and while one of their number kept guard armed with a pick-axe, carried them all off.

Yet another instance in which the contraband dealer had the best of the bargain is recorded at Alum Bay, where a cartload of tubs was met by a revenue officer just as it was landed. Being but one man against several, however, he was seized, handcuffed, and blindfolded, and in that condition compelled to walk with the cart five miles to Tapnell Farm, where the goods were hidden; after which he was made "blind drunk," and in that condition left not far from his home, the bandage being only then removed from his eyes. Naturally he said nothing about this adventure, and never knew in which direction he had been taken.

One of the most remarkable trials in the history of the Navy took place in this district in 1834, when Lieutenant Josiah Darnford and all the Freshwater coastguards were arraigned for complicity with the smugglers. The Court of Inquiry elicited many suspicious circumstances.

One of them had been seen drinking many times with William Lane, a notorious leader, who it was said paid the coastguards £10 each for every hundred tubs safely landed. A large cargo was certainly run, carried up a steep path in the chalk cliffs, and concealed under the downs, while the coastguards were carousing on Christmas Day ; and soon after sixty or seventy men, each with a barrel on his back, walked boldly through the village and past the church while Sunday morning service was going on. Many other instances of the laxity of vigilance were quoted ; but, on the other hand, some to their credit. Eight years previously Lieutenant Darnford had captured a boat with 524 tubs of brandy, all the crew escaping except one man, and a boat with eighty of them was taken at another time near Cowes. These facts just saved the situation for them, and they were acquitted, but with a reprimand for their slackness, and an order for their immediate removal to another neighbourhood. The sentence of the court rather reminds one of a famous judge's remark to a prisoner : " You are acquitted, but don't do it again, sir ! "

The south-east coast was perhaps a still more

highly favoured haunt of smugglers than the Isle of Wight, and my husband described to me an exploration he and his two brothers made during the summer holidays in 1871 of a cave used as a hiding-place for tubs before the coastguards got so active and became such a menace to the traders. Plumb under the round, flint tower of Kingsgate Castle (my husband's birthplace) there is to be seen to this day a squarish hole high up in the cliff. The friendly coastguard told the boys that this was a smugglers' cave, so they simply ached to go and see what was inside it. French leave having been decided on, a garden ladder was "borrowed," which, when set up on the beach, proved much too short to reach the lip of the hole; however, all three boys mounted and the second one hoisted my husband up the last five feet, and was then helped and hauled up too; after this the youngest (Lancelot) was pulled up by his wrists like a limp and helpless wet rag. Then out came the box of "tand-stikors," those smelly things, and a candle end was lighted and the exploration began. At first there were millions of gnats to be passed, but after that the boys found they must go on all fours, for the hole was but three feet high.

They crept along the upward-sloping floor, which was quite black and polished by the small trucks that had been used to haul the contraband kegs more than a quarter of a mile to the kitchen of a house known as "The Convent." Dare we suppose that the nuns were in the secret? Here, however, the boys found the passage blocked by brickwork; the coastguard declared the cook had given notice that "unless that there 'orrid 'ole was stuffed up immediate, she wasn't going to stay with the chance of nasty pirates all beard and pistols popping up in HER kitching at inconwenient moments."

Well! these adventurous days are over now; yet there is a possibility lurking behind that "now" which may suggest a recurrence of them in the future. The grit in our British nature is still there, the true sporting instinct, and (I must add) the greed for gain. If the Government persists with short-sighted ideas of economy in reducing the coastguards with a view of ultimately doing away altogether with that invaluable body, there is an old proverb which says, "When the cat's away the mice will play," and—the duty on spirits is higher than ever! *Qui vivra verra!*

CHAPTER XV

ON THE GREAT WAR

AND what of the most stupendous upheaval ever recorded in the world's history, which it has been the fate of this generation of ours to live through, and take a part, active or passive, in—the Great War? I have said little or nothing about it hitherto, not because I was unaffected by the absorbing interest and tragedy of it, but because it has been dealt with so thoroughly by competent and experienced men who were actually through those stirring and terrible scenes, instead of an insignificant and distant observer of them. Still, even those who were far from the fighting and could only lend a humble helping hand in small, though useful and well-organised ways from a safe distance, had their burden to bear, if only in the four and a quarter years of ceaseless and long-drawn-out anxiety, with its succeeding emotions of hope and fear, pride in the exploits

of our gallant men, and horror at the death, suffering, and destruction that ran riot throughout Europe—as if all the devils from hell had been loosed to work their wicked will.

The year after the War—indeed as soon as the railways had been repaired and travel conditions were possible—I went over to France and saw the unbelievable havoc wrought by the awful engines of destruction that are the tools of modern warfare on towns and villages, woods, and once fertile, cultivated country. Things were then all lying in untouched and piteous ruin. France and Belgium were still licking their wounds, and were too exhausted to pull themselves together and grapple with the tremendous problem, but three years after the armistice I was over there again, and the difference was marked. The great Cloth Hall and Cathedral at Ypres, and those at Rheims and Arras, were still untouched, gaunt and terrible in their mutilation, but the fields were beginning to get under cultivation again, and houses were rising in the towns like mushrooms—thin, jerry-built imitations of the stately solid Flemish houses of the seventeenth century, but still *houses*, standing where shortly before were shapeless mounds of debris. At that time the British public, to use their own words, were

“fed up” with the War. The reaction from all that anxiety and horror began when I was in London on that wonderful November 11, 1918, and I was a witness to the extraordinary sight of the whole populace going mad with joy—trying, poor creatures, to express a relief that was too big for words. Then came a time when they combined to taboo the subject of the War, and craved only to forget its troublous years to the best of their ability—a thing possible, perhaps, to the majority and to the irresponsible and young, but not, alas! to the many thousands who had lost their best and dearest, nor to those who had to continue their lives maimed and broken in the cause of honour and duty. When I returned from my second visit to the battlefields I brought back a journal full of sketches and notes that I thought would interest others besides myself—chats with people in Arras and Laon, of their experiences, their life in underground cellars, their difficulty in getting the bare necessities of life, the final and sudden flight of the Germans from Laon after two years’ occupation, and so on. I went straight with the journal to the editor of a well-known magazine for whom I have frequently written articles, thinking he would secure it at once, but he wouldn’t look

at it. "Let us have some more of your sea and yachting articles, Mrs. Speed," he said, "but don't speak to me of anything connected with the War—the public want to forget it." I was surprised, and remarked how much we should like to read such things written in 1817 of the recollections of peasants in the vicinity of Waterloo, and he said: "So the people will be a hundred years hence in events connected with the Great War, but not now." And other editors I visited corroborated his opinion, so my article remained unwritten. Perhaps those notes and sketches will be unearthed by somebody in 2028 and published for the appreciation of the public then, if indeed the whole civilisation has not been destroyed in the universal holocaust another great world-war will mean !

Let us hope and pray that the League of Nations (taken up, it appears to me, at present, far too half-heartedly) will have become before long such a powerful and omnipotent machine for adjudicating on vexed questions that the demon of war will be trodden underfoot by the administrations of disinterested common-sense and justice. Therein lies our only hope of future peace and prosperity.

CHAPTER XVI

ON CHANGES IN OTHER COUNTRIES

I CANNOT conclude these reminiscences of the changing days I have seen without glancing at the astounding alterations that have taken place in other countries during the last half-century or so. I have never had the good fortune to visit Japan, but the accounts of its growth from a dreamy and picturesque land of peace into a world-power interests me much. The story of it reminds one of a fairy sleeping in a lovely wood and being rudely awakened by a great rough giant! It was only a little before our own day, in the middle of the last century (1853), that its quiet existence was first broken in upon by the arrival of American battleships in Yedo Bay, and the alternative unceremoniously offered the Japanese of either opening up their beautiful lotus-land to the Americans for trading purposes voluntarily, or by force

of arms and bombardment. They were naturally not in a position to defy this demand, so the unwelcome foreigner in that year for the first time set his unwanted foot on the soil of that virgin country, the dynasty of which has lasted without a break for 2,512 years—typical of the unchanging land Japan has been till recently, for it was not till 1868 that the drastic movement began, the feudal system was abandoned, and various decrees of the Emperor started a forward push with the times, and a gradual introduction of factories superseding the splendid handwork of previous days, and the building of modern houses in the place of the picturesque dwellings of old. Now Japan is vying with the West in all her methods, and I am told that the quaint, interesting country many travellers can remember seeing in their youth is fast disappearing altogether. It is very strange that with everything else advancing the Japanese have not adopted a higher form of religion ! The worship of their own ancestors seems a very unsatisfactory form of devotion for poor human nature, which has required in all other ages and lands something ethereal and exalted far above the mortality and frailty which belongs to our own flesh, for the soul to

look up to and adore, or even to fear and propitiate, as the heathen do. To respect one's great-grandfather's memory is one thing, to *worship* at his tomb is another, and seems very foolish !

In 1892, when I spent some weeks in Morocco, that country was described as "more Eastern than the East." It was indeed a garden of surprises and delights for an artist and lover of beauty to revel in. The streets, the mosques, the dresses of the people, their customs, their markets and bazaars, were a constantly changing kaleidoscope of interest and delight. The Sultan was then an autocrat in whose smile and frown lurked life and death. His Grand Vizier and Kaids were a law unto themselves. Corruption, cruelty, and injustice crept hidden but rampant beneath the top crust of beauty and picturesque customs. Then came the French and the Spaniards, eyeing and coveting that wonderful land of undeveloped minerals and mines with its rich soil and glorious climate. The end of the old régime was only a question of time. Long after the Sultan had become a puppet who danced to the pulling of strings by alien hands, the last rebel (or patriot, according to different opinions) Abdul Krim, gave up the

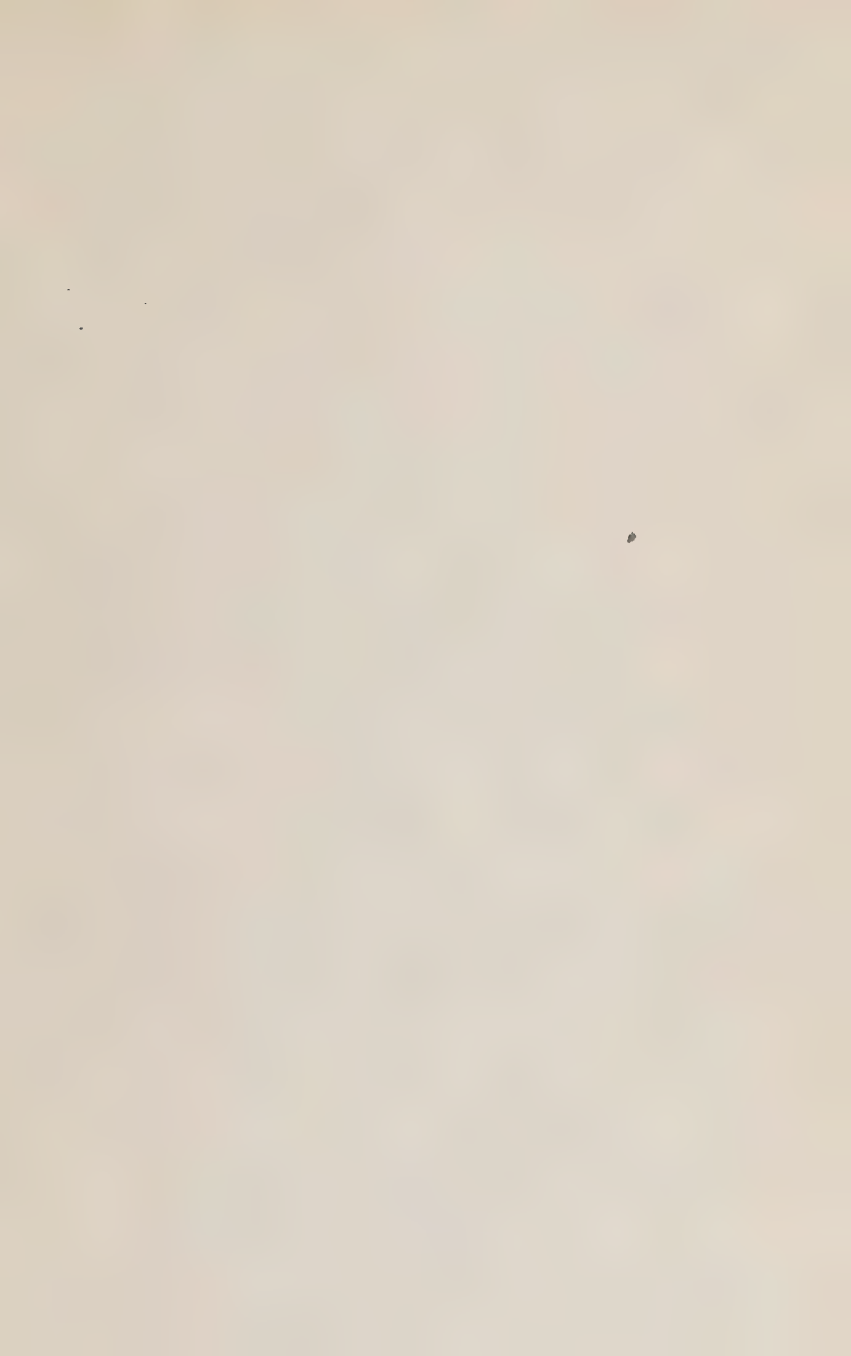
hopeless struggle which had lasted for years, and was seized and sent into exile. He was a minor Sultan over the warlike and high-spirited Riff tribe, and had the same foolish ideas about the land which for centuries had been the Moor's belonging to the Moors, as we should have about our country if an alien race endeavoured to overrun England! Still, what chance could coral-studded, long-stocked guns and brass-handled daggers have against modern artillery and the bombardments of aeroplanes, or how could the grand little Barbary horses and their fearless riders stand up with any eventual success against armoured cars and tanks? When in 52 B.C. the Romans were conquering Gaul, Vercingetorix, who defied them with his faithful band of followers till all the surrounding country had fallen, was doubtless called a rebel, but *now* he is acclaimed as a hero, and his statue adorns the Square at Clermont Ferrand. So perhaps when another 2,000 years have passed Abdul Krim, who held at bay for several years two of the most powerful countries of Europe, may have his statue erected in the heart of a great modern Fez, and I much regret that circumstances over which I have no control will prevent my subscribing to it! Now the

“French protectorate,” as it is politely called (with a knowing wink), is changing the old order and bringing in the new, and no doubt there is a great deal of good reaped by the populace in the process. The confiscation of private property to enrich greedy Kaids cannot go on as it did formerly. The protection of a law that is no respecter of persons, and cannot be squared or bribed, has brought a sense of security to the people that they have never known before. When I was in Morocco* there was not a road in the whole land, and the only wheeled vehicle was a little dust-cart at Tangier ! Now, well-made roads run between all the large towns, railways are being laid, motor omnibuses and cars of all descriptions are in evidence, and I am told that the camels in the markets are being rapidly replaced by hideous motor lorries ! Well, I am glad I saw Morocco when the caravans of camels laden with merchandise entering into those walled cities was a picture of the East of a thousand years ago, when the city gates closed at sunset and never opened again on any pretext whatever till sunrise, and the tinkling bells of mules, camels, and horses, and the cry of the muezzins from the minarets of the mosques were not drowned by the hooting

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of motor horns and the other discordant noises
of to-day !

In Syria also have come changes. When my husband and I were there in 1895 conditions in Jerusalem were much the same as when Our Lord walked its sacred streets 1900 years ago. The only new thing was a single-line railway from Jaffa, but that stopped short of the city, and the approach up the hill to its walls was made on horseback or in carriages, and I hear with regret of new motor roads, railways, and large buildings coming up outside the walls, for they must all tend to destroy the ancient and Oriental character of the place. "The hills stand about Jerusalem" in all that sterile bleakness they must, from their very nature, have worn when the Psalmist wrote those words, and the city of A.D. 1 must have been much like the one we see on that spot to-day, and it will be lamentable if it is spoilt for those who will come after us. An episode I had there will never fade from my memory. We were staying in the only hotel in the place—just inside the Jaffa Gate—and before dawn I crept out of my room and went up to the flat roof. The Holy City lay in that silence which comes everywhere with the last hours of night,





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and the dawn coming in golden streaks through dark clouds behind the hills of Moab gradually touched each tower and dome with light while the narrow streets still lay in darkness. There was something weird and unearthly in that silent daybreak over a place with such a history !

Damascus in 1895 was a gem of unspoilt Eastern beauty, only reached by an 80-mile drive on a diligence from Beyrout, starting daily at 4.30 A.M. Ninety horses were used on the twelve hours' drive (which crossed both chains of the Lebanons) as six were driven by an Arab in flowing robes and turban, and they were changed fifteen times. A railway has now replaced the diligence, and since the War and the consequent end of Turkish rule there, Western buildings, I am told, are springing up, and even the extremely picturesque costumes of the people are in danger of disappearing !

I also had the good luck to be in Turkey and to see Constantinople while under the Sultan's (probably) corrupt and despotic rule, before the arrival on the scene of that unpleasant person the " Young Turk " ! He and his rulers are very busy now endeavouring to wipe out all that belongs to the Old East, which made it the dream-city it was, especially when

the shades of evening fell and its mosques and tall minarets were reflected in the waters of the Golden Horn, over which skimmed dancing caiques and fishing-boats with dark sails, ere the coming of motor launches. Narrow streets and covered bazaars do not accord with modern traffic, so gradually they and the many mosques and beauteous little groups of dark trees amongst the white, flat-roofed buildings will be swept away to make room for factories and cinemas and garages. For future generations the East, as we who look back thirty years remember it, will have vanished !

The pity is that while the invader brings so much that is excellent into Mohammedan countries (especially in the way of sanitation, hospitals, and Courts of Justice), he manages to undermine too often many of the noble characteristics and virtues of the people and to induce a slackness in carrying out the precepts of their religion without converting them to another and more enlightened one.

I was painting the Soko Gate at Tangier during the old régime under the awning of an intelligent English-speaking Moor who had courteously provided me with a seat close to his stall of red leather slippers, and he talked to me of various things. " The seaport

people," he said, "are not good like those in the interior. Here in Tangier they learn to drink alcohol from the many Christians who come here, and to break the great fast of Ramazan by smoking or eating during the hours between sunrise and sunset. If they were caught doing that in inland towns, or drinking wine, the people would stone them to death!" (That was a nasty one for the Christians, wasn't it?) When I went through Algeria some years after I had been in Morocco, I thought the whole race *very* inferior to the Moors in dignity and natural good manners, yet I suppose before the final and complete subjugation of the country by the French in 1872 their *métier* was much the same. The graceful robes and beautiful colours that had been theirs for hundreds of years were fast being replaced in the country round Algiers itself by old trousers and bowler hats from the second-hand shops of France, and when a nation changes its national dress and casts off its old religion, it often loses its old-time character and deteriorates altogether, for the converting of Mohammedans into Christians is a very discouraging and hopeless task for missionaries, and their efforts are seldom crowned with any real success.

CHAPTER XVII

CONCLUSION

LIFE is indeed a mystery—too often a tangled skein, made so by our own hands—and death a greater mystery still. It seems to me that the countless millions who come, play their little part for weal or for woe, and vanish to make room for the oncomers are like a great and never-ceasing natural geyser or fountain, in which the crystal waters are for ever rising though never the same. We are thrown upwards by the irresistible force of the river of Time, then we sink back into that rushing stream and are borne swiftly away for ever—but the fountain goes on just the same! What we are all doing the Great Ruler of the universe whose hand swings the whole complicated machine alone knows, but that we are part of a great plan in which everything works by rule and order there can be no doubt, any more than

there can be that *One* great Master-hand alone is the operator—

“ So man who here seems principal alone
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal—
’Tis but a part we see, and not the whole.”

As I write at my window looking out over broad marshes and the waters of the Solent to the hills of the Isle of Wight beyond, the rays of the sinking sun gild the sedges with a golden glory they never wore at morning or noon. It is an emblem of the evening of life. Everything is very tranquil, but the lengthening shadows speak of the night drawing nigh and life’s course nearly done. The distant hills fade into haze, but memory dwells on every point and height. There are those touched with that enchanting light “that was never yet on land or sea,” and on these the thoughts linger lovingly whether in daytime or in dreams by night, and there are the dark cliffs and precipices which the mind’s eye can never forget or wipe away into merciful oblivion, for they are a part of life’s great play, and we must all take the rough with the smooth. It is given to few of us to leave

“ Footprints on the sands of time,”

but if, when the final curtain rings down, we

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leave behind us like the afterglow in evening skies a trail of kindly and sympathetic deeds, or if we have helped to make even *one* life happier and better for our companionship, I think we shall not have lived in vain !

FINIS

Miss POORE BOOK.

